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Background Release

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WORLD LEADERS TO CONVENE AT UN CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT AT RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL, 3-14 JUNE

To Consider Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, 'Agenda 21', Principles on Forests; Sign Conventions on Climate Change and Biodiversity

A viable and equitable balance between environment and development, and a sustainable future for the earth and its people, is the challenge facing world leaders when they convene in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 3 to 14 June, for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED).

To meet that challenge, the more than 100 Heads of State and Government attending the Conference, also known as the "Earth Summit", will consider for adoption a Rio Declaration on Environment and Development; "Agenda 21", a blueprint for action for the sustainable development of planet earth into the twenty-first century; and a set of principles on the world's forests. They are also expected to sign the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Framework Convention on Biological Diversity.

All the documents before the Conference stress the interdependence of socio-economic development and the protection of the environment, as well as the differentiated responsibilities and needs of nations in relation to a life in harmony with nature.

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali will open the Conference at 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday, 3 June, at the Riocentro Convention Centre. It will include a seven-day general debate, in plenary sessions; concurrent negotiating meetings of a Main Committee; and a two-day summit segment, starting on 12 June.

The draft Rio Declaration on Environment and Development is a set of 27 principles to govern the economic and environmental behaviour of individuals and nations in the quest for global sustainability.

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Agenda 21 is a comprehensive plan of action, extending into the twenty-first century, which covers all areas affecting the relationship between the environment and the economy. Negotiations on the financial resources and mechanisms to implement the plan of action are to continue at Rio.

The Agenda's recommendations to the Conference address issues such as protection of the oceans, transboundary air pollution, combating deforestation, desertification and drought, as well as the role of indigenous peoples, the business community and women in implementing sustainable development. Cross-sectoral issues include the meeting of basic human needs, such as health and education, as well as the eradication of poverty -- considered to be the main source of environmental problems in developing countries.

Other recommendations of Agenda 21 include the transition to patterns of production and consumption in the industrialized countries which would significantly reduce their disproportionate contribution to the deterioration of the earth's environment. The strengthening of traditional systems of production and the utilization of the most advanced technology are suggested among means to achieve those aims.

Also to be considered for adoption at Rio is a statement of principles for a global consensus on the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests. Arrangements for institutionalizing the continuation of UNCED's work within the United Nations system are expected to be finalized at the Conference.

The texts approved during the UNCED preparatory process are still open for negotiations at Rio. Representatives of Governments will attempt to conclude, in two weeks, what they were unable to resolve over two years.

The two legally binding Conventions were negotiated in processes parallel to the preparations for UNCED: the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, aimed at stabilizing emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases to prevent the "greenhouse effect"; and the Framework Convention on Biological Diversity, which concerns the conservation and sustainable use of all the earth's species -- plants, animals and micro-organisms -- and the ecosystems of which they are a part.

The Conference will involve an unprecedented level of participation by non-governmental organizations. They will convene at the '92 Global Forum, a series of parallel events, including over 250 substantive meetings, workshops, seminars, lectures, debates and other forms of discussions, exhibits and cultural events, to be held at Flamengo Park. Those activities will provide an opportunity for all sectors to express their independent views on issues before UNCED.

A highlight of the Conference will be the observance of World Environment Day, on 5 June, marking the twentieth anniversary of the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, held in Stockholm, Sweden. That Conference marked the introduction of the relationship between economic

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development and environmental impact into the international agenda. A tree-planting ceremony on the grounds of the Conference site, co-hosted by President Fernando Collor of Brazil and King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden, is scheduled.

Maurice Strong, of Canada, who was Secretary-General of the Stockholm Conference, holds the same post at the Rio Conference. He says UNCED's primary goal "will be to lay the foundation for a global partnership between developing and industrialized countries based on mutual need and common interests to ensure the future of the planet".

Details of the documents before the Conference follow:

Rio Declaration on Environment and Development

The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development is the only "clean" text -- free from brackets signifying areas of disagreement among negotiators -- to be sent to Rio (document A/CONF.151/5). It contains 27 draft principles proposed by the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference, Tommy Koh (Singapore).

According to the draft Declaration, States have the sovereign right to exploit their own resources, pursuant to their own environmental and development policies. They also have the responsibility to ensure that activities within their jurisdiction do not cause damage to the environment or areas beyond the limits of their national jurisdiction. The right to development must be fulfilled so as to equitably meet the developmental and environmental needs of present and future generations.

States, which have common but differentiated responsibilities, should cooperate in eradicating poverty and protecting and restoring the health and integrity of the earth's ecosystem, the Declaration continues. To achieve sustainable development and a higher quality of life for all people, States should eliminate unsustainable patterns of production and consumption and promote appropriate demographic policies. Calling for a supportive and open international economic system, the Declaration says environmental purposes should not arbitrarily discriminate or disguise restriction of international trade.

Other principles provide that: States must take a precautionary approach to the environment; lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation; and the polluter should, in principle, bear the cost of pollution, with due regard for the public interest and without distorting international trade and investment. Peace, development and environmental protection are interdependent and indivisible, and States should resolve their environmental disputes peacefully, it concludes.

The Preparatory Committee approved the draft Rio Declaration by acclamation, although several delegations reserved their right to reopen discussion on it. It was originally conceived of as an "Earth Charter", an inspirational general statement which the industrialized countries believed

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should stress the need to protect the environment. The "Group of 77" developing countries favoured a more substantial document reflecting a greater balance between development and environmental concerns, as well as a commitment by the developed countries to provide funds and technology for sustainable development.

In its final draft form, the Rio Declaration represents a compromise: "the best possible outcome of the complicated process of negotiation", said Ole Kristian Holte (Norway); "a very finely balanced document", according to Jamsheed Marker (Pakistan), Chairman of the Group of 77.

Agenda 21

Covering all areas where environment and the economy intersect, Agenda 21 is a comprehensive plan of action aimed at reshaping human activities in order to minimize environmental damage and ensure sustainability in the development process. Action-oriented proposals are divided into programme areas which are described in terms of the basis for action; objectives; activities; and means of implementation, including financing and cost evaluation as well as scientific and technological means (document A/CONF.151/4, Parts I to IV).

At the fourth and final session of the Preparatory Committee, negotiations over financial resources and mechanisms were suspended without even a bracketed text materializing. It was decided that work on those issues would continue at Rio, on the basis of a revised text submitted by the Group of 77 and China.

While some headway was achieved in the negotiations, final formulas were not developed. The two main obstacles cited were: a timetable for donor countries to reach the agreed international target of committing 0.7 per cent of gross national product (GNP) for official development assistance (ODA); and control of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) -- a fund jointly established by the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to help developing countries finance environmentally sustainable development.

The text submitted by the Group of 77 and China states that economic growth is essential to meet the challenge of sustainable development, and recognizes the interrelationship between "global" and "local" environmental problems. Stressing the importance of a supportive international economic climate conducive to sustainable economic growth and development, it states that measures are needed in areas such as market access, terms of trade, remunerative commodity price, diversification of productive sectors, transfer of technologies, debt problems and alleviation of poverty.

The text calls for the provision of adequate, predictable, new and additional financial resources for the implementation of Agenda 21, with no reallocation of existing multilateral or bilateral financial flows. Such additional funds should be provided, to a large extent, on a grant basis and could include concessionary flows. An appropriate mechanism should be established to provide that additional funding for the implementation of Agenda 21 be separate from ODA target commitments by the developed countries.

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The governance of such a fund -- the so-called "green fund" -- should include criteria providing for its transparency, democratic nature with equal voice for all parties, as well as access and disbursement to all developing countries without any conditionality.

Prospects for an agreement on funding at Rio are uncertain, although some aid commitments during the Conference are envisaged.

Agenda 21's 40 chapters include proposed programme areas relating to combating poverty, changing consumption patterns, addressing demographic dynamics and human settlements, promoting health, and integrating environment and development in decision-making and international cooperation. The Agenda contains recommendations for: protecting the atmosphere, the oceans and the quality and supply of freshwater resources; combating deforestation as well as desertification and drought; promoting sustainable rural and mountain development; and conserving biological diversity. It also addresses the environmentally sound management of biotechnology, of toxic chemicals and radioactive and hazardous wastes, including prevention of their illegal international traffic.

Towards reaching those ends, Agenda 21 suggests strengthening the role of major social groups, including women, children and youth, indigenous people and their communities, non-governmental organizations, local authorities, workers and trade unions, business and industry, the scientific and technological communities, and farmers. For its implementation, the Agenda makes recommendations on science for sustainable development, the promotion of education, capacity-building in developing countries, as well as on institutional arrangements for UNCED's follow-up.

Although much of Agenda 21's language was agreed upon during the preparatory process, contentious points remain. In the text concerning transfer of technology -- an expression which some industrialized countries would like to see replaced by "technological cooperation" -- differences range from the placement of a comma to the choice of a title, for which four formulations are suggested. Also bracketed is the text concerning the terms of such a transfer, intellectual property rights and the possible creation of an international code of conduct on transfer of technology.

The text on protection of the atmosphere is being sent to Rio entirely in brackets. More brackets are to be found in the chapter on international policies and sustainable development in references to agricultural subsidies, to the International Development Strategy, to trade liberalization initiatives, and policies to make production more responsive to the environment and development. The chapter on desertification contains a provision in brackets relating to the drafting of an international convention to combat that problem in all affected areas, particularly in Africa. Brackets also surround the text calling for the prevention of illegal international traffic in toxic and dangerous products.

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Another contentious issue which the Conference has been requested to reconsider is the critical question of depleting fish stocks by overfishing. Also controversial are ethical and cultural considerations relating to the responsibilities and rights of men and women, as addressed in the chapters on combating poverty and protecting and promoting human health.

The Conference secretariat estimates that $125 billion per year -- $70 billion more than current ODA levels -- would be needed from international concessional financing to enable developing countries to implement the programmes proposed in Agenda 21. That amount represents only one fifth of what would be required to fully implement UNCED's blueprint for action extending to the twenty-first century.

As to institutional arrangements for continuing UNCED's work, there is agreement that the intergovernmental follow-up to the Conference should be within the framework of the United Nations system, with the General Assembly being the supreme policy-making forum that would provide overall political guidance.

Further discussions will take place at Rio on how the Assembly should provide such guidance. Two alternatives under consideration are: a sustainable development commission, made up of elected Member States, reporting directly to the Assembly on matters of substance, and through the Economic and Social Council on matters of coordination; or a committee, as a new subsidiary body of the Council, dealing specifically with sustainable development, and reporting through it to the Assembly.

The new body would monitor the implementation of Agenda 21; consider reports from Governments on the progress made; review adherence to commitments regarding financing and technology transfer; and analyse contributions made by non-governmental organizations, including the scientific community and the private sector.

The text calls upon the Assembly, at its next regular session, to determine specific modalities for the work and other organizational aspects of institutional arrangements agreed upon at UNCED. The Secretary-General, as the chief administrative officer of the Organization, is requested to report also on the arrangements to be made regarding staffing implications, taking into account gender balance and the need for the optimum use of existing resources.

The text stresses the need for an enhanced and strengthened role for UNEP and its Governing Council, recommending that the Programme should, within its mandate, continue to play its role with regard to policy guidance and coordination in the field of environment, addressing also the development perspective. The role of the UNDP Resident Representative/Resident Coordinator should be strengthened in order to allow for coordination, at the field level, of United Nations operational activities. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) also has an important role to play in continuing UNCED's work, in view of the interrelationships between development, international trade and the environment.

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Principles on All Types of Forests

A set of 17 non-binding principles for a global consensus on the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests (document A/CONF.151/6) remains heavily bracketed. The text states that the burden of the incremental cost of forest conservation and sustainable development requires increased international cooperation and should either "be equitably shared by the international community" or "be the responsibility of all countries".

Forest resources and lands should be sustainably managed to meet the social, economic, ecological, cultural and spiritual human needs of present and future generations, the text goes on. They include needs for forest products and services, such as wood products, water, food, fuel, employment, recreation and wildlife habitats. Measures should be taken to protect those resources against pollution, fires, pests and diseases. All types of forests are vital for meeting energy requirements, particularly in developing countries, as they provide a renewable source of bio-energy.

Points of disagreement include payments to developing countries for earnings lost to forest conservation measures and for other economic and developmental adjustments made during the shift to sustainable forest management; balancing sovereignty with global efforts to conserve and sustainably manage forests; access to genetic material and other biological resources; the terms of technology transfer; the terms of international trade in forest products; and controlling and preventing transboundary air pollution that affects forests.

A proposal introduced early in the preparatory process, to draft a legally binding convention on forests, for signature at Rio, was later transformed into an agreement to draft a statement of principles which would serve as the basis for the negotiation of a convention at a later stage. Such a post-UNCED convention would deal with all types of forests, including those of temperate and boreal latitudes (in northern Europe) and not just tropical forests.

Framework Convention on Climate Change

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change was adopted on 9 May by the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee established by the General Assembly to draft such an instrument. The deliberations took 15 months and five sessions, with the final session involving representatives of 150 countries. The Convention will be open for signature at Rio and, following the Conference, will remain open at United Nations Headquarters until 19 June 1993. It will enter into force after ratification by 50 States parties.

The Convention's aim is to protect the atmosphere from a build-up of anthropogenic gases that trap heat from the sun, causing an enhanced "greenhouse effect". The final document does not provide specific timetables and targets for limiting emissions of greenhouse gases by industrialized countries. It sets out, as an objective, the stabilization of greenhouse gas

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concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous interference with the climate system. Such a level, it states, should be reached within a time-frame sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change.

As a first step towards reaching that goal, developed country parties specified in the text recognize the importance of returning to their 1990 levels of greenhouse gas emissions by the end of this decade. Although the Convention does not indicate what will happen with regard to emissions after the year 2000, it does provide for the establishment of machinery, in the form of a Conference of the Parties, to take decisions regarding subsequent steps, as needed. It provides also for a review, at least twice before the year 2000, of the implementation of the commitments as well as for amendments.

As a framework convention -- consisting of general principles, commitments and obligations framed in such a way as to gain the adherence of the largest possible number of countries -- the text contains provisions designed to serve as the basis for other legal instruments, such as protocols, dealing with specific issues.

The Committee which negotiated the Convention agreed that during the interim period between its signing and its entry into force, a "restructured" GEF will be entrusted with the operation of the financial mechanism for assisting developing countries in implementing the Convention. (The Chairman's report on the second part of the last session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee is contained in document A/AC.237/18 (Part II) and Add.1.)

Framework Convention on Biological Diversity

The Framework Convention on Biological Diversity was adopted on 22 May by an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee under UNEP's sponsorship, after almost four years of deliberations. Representatives of some 100 countries participated in the final session at Nairobi. The Convention will be presented for signing at Rio and will enter into force after ratification by 30 States parties.

The Convention is good both for the industrialized countries as well as for developing countries, according to Mostafa K. Tolba, UNEP's Executive Director. It accepts the idea that industrialized countries must help developing countries financially and with know-how; it recognizes that the financial assistance must be in addition to current levels of development assistance; that the responsibility for setting up a network of protected areas rests first with each country; and that the first beneficiaries of the conservation and sustainable use of wild plant and animal species should be the rural communities and indigenous people whose traditional knowledge and respect for those resources has preserved them for centuries.

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Under the Convention's provisions, industrialized countries of the North will have a degree of access to the biological resources of the developing countries of the South, and the South will have new access to the technological resources of the North, Mr. Tolba said.

By biological diversity, scientists mean all the earth's species of plants, animals and micro-organisms, and the ecosystems of which they are a part. The Convention is a response to widespread agreement concerning the need for an international instrument to protect biodiversity -- an umbrella term for nature's variety. It meets the concerns of Governments, environmental organizations and scientists that the biological diversity of the planet is being seriously reduced, with many species facing extinction due to, among other causes, habitat destruction, pollution, human population growth, unsustainable exploitation and the unlawful plundering of wild flora and fauna.

Among the most contentious issues raised during the negotiations were the provision of financial resources for implementing the Convention, by either voluntary or assessed contributions, and the choice of an institution to handle it. Negotiators agreed to leave the decision on countries' contributions to the Convention's first Conference of the Parties. They also agreed that a restructured GEF, along lines specified in the text, should handle contributions on an interim basis until treaty signatories decide upon a permanent arrangement at their first meeting.

The Convention does not make specific reference to genetically modified organisms. However, such organisms are understood to be included in the broader formulation referring to "living modified organisms resulting from biotechnology". Also absent from the text is the idea of drawing up a global list of protected areas. Instead, every country ratifying the Convention will put together its own list of protected areas. It is expected that, eventually, that will become a global list. (The Chairman's report on the last session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee will be before the Conference.)

Other Documents

The following texts are being brought to the attention of the Conference's participants: Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Environment and Development, adopted by the Second Ministerial Conference of Developing Countries on Environment and Development (Kuala Lumpur, 26-29 April) (document A/47/203); Joint Communiqué of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Environment Ministers Conference (New Delhi, 8-9 April) (document A/CONF.151/12); report of the Secretary-General on protection and preservation of the marine environment (document A/CONF.151/10); report of the Secretary-General on further substantive follow-up of General Assembly resolutions 42/186 (environmental perspective to the year 2000 and beyond) and 42/187 (report of the World Commission on Environment and Development) by Governments and organizations of the United Nations system (document

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A/47/121-E/1992/15); and report of UNEP's Executive Director on the status of desertification and implementation of the United Nations Plan of Action to Combat Desertification (document UNEP/GCSS.III/3 and addenda).

In addition, the Conference will have before it the report of UNCED's Preparatory Committee on its fourth substantive session (document A/CONF.151/PC/128).

Conference Background: from Stockholm '72 to Rio '92

The relationship between economic development and environmental impact was first included in the international agenda at the 1972 Stockholm Conference. However, from then until 1987, when Our Common Future, the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, was published, little was done to integrate that dual concept in practical terms. The Brundtland Report, as it is also known (after Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland of Norway, who chaired the Commission), states that a new development path is required, one that will sustain human progress, not just in a few places for a few years, but for the entire planet into the distant future. Thus, "sustainable development" should become a goal for both developing and industrialized countries.

Among the report's recommendations was a proposal that regional and global meetings should be held to continue the work of the Commission. The General Assembly, by its resolution 44/228 of 22 December 1989, decided to hold the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Brazil, in June 1992, as an international forum to devise strategies that would fully integrate the relationship between environment and development into every aspect of economic life and behaviour.

By the same resolution, the Assembly established a Preparatory Committee for the Conference, consisting of all Member States of the United Nations and of the specialized agencies. The Committee was mandated to draft the provisional agenda for the Conference (document A/CONF.151/1); its provisional rules of procedure (document A/CONF.151/2), and an organizational plan of work (document A/CONF.151/3); to adopt guidelines for States in the preparations for the Conference and prepare draft decisions for consideration and adoption by the Conference. Another of its tasks was to define the funding and technology needs of developing countries so that they could include environmental considerations in their development policies, and to agree on how those needs could best be met.

The Committee held an organizational session in New York in March 1990. Its substantive sessions were held in Nairobi (6 to 31 August 1990); in Geneva (18 March to 5 April and 14 August to 4 September 1991); and New York (2 March to 3 April).

Over the last two years, a series of conferences and meetings were held under United Nations auspices, aimed at formulating positions and making recommendations on questions pertaining to the preparatory process for the Conference, including regional gatherings held in Bergen, Norway (May 1990),

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Bangkok (October 1990), Mexico City (March 1991) and Cairo (July 1991). Other Conference-related activities included the opening of a voluntary fund to support the participation of developing countries, especially the least developed, in both the preparatory process and the Conference itself.

Summing up the preparations leading up to the Conference, Jean-Claude Faby, Director of UNCED's New York secretariat, said: "UNCED has been, in a way, a laboratory and learning experience, and we have done rather well in exploring new territory and coming up with solutions to new problems."

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SECRETARY-GENERAL, IN STATEMENT TO ENVIRONMENT/DEVELOPMENT MEETING, STRESSES NEED FOR FULL AWARENESS OF PLANET'S FRAGILITY

The following is the text of the statement made today by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali at the opening meeting of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil:

Dans les matières dont nous allons débattre au cours de la Conférence que j'ai le grand honneur d'ouvrir à cet instant, rien ne serait plus dangereux que de céder à l'emphase des mots, et de s'en satisfaire. Rien ne serait plus dangereux que de croire, ou de donner à croire, que, par le simple fait que les choses sont dites, les défis sont relevés. Et pourtant, je ne pense pas céder à l'emphase des formules en disant que le moment présent est historique. Historique, oui, je crois qu'il l'est, je suis sûr qu'il l'est, et j'avancerais pour cela trois raisons, chacune suffisant à nous inspirer une émotion profonde, à l'heure où s'ouvre une conférence que va suivre le monde entier.

Comprenons bien, d'abord, ce que signifie ce sommet : voici une assemblée de nations, unies devant nous, représentées au plus haut niveau par leurs dirigeants, soutenues par une exceptionnelle mobilisation des peuples, et décidées à réfléchir, puis à agir ensemble pour protéger leur planète. Cette réunion prouve que nous avons compris à quel point notre Terre était fragile et, avec elle, la vie qui s'y abrite : c'est en cela, d'abord, qu'elle est historique, manifestant un changement radical du regard que l'homme porte sur lui-même. Autrefois, l'individu était entouré d'une nature abondante, au point d'être menaçante par son immensité; cela était vrai encore au début de ce siècle. Toute victoire était une victoire sur la nature, depuis les fauves menaçant l'homme des cavernes jusqu'aux distances séparant les communautés. Les fauves ont été vaincus, les distances ont été vaincues et, entre ces deux conquêtes, on peut dire que toute science a été fondée sur l'opposition du couple homme/nature - l'homme progressant en domptant peu à peu une nature infinie.

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Or, voici venu aujourd'hui "le temps du monde fini" - un monde où nous sommes tous "assignés à résidence" : cela veut dire tout simplement qu'il n'y a plus de nature au sens classique de ce terme, que toute nature, désormais, est entre les mains des hommes. Cela veut dire aussi que l'homme a gagné sur son environnement; victoire au plus haut point dangereuse! ... Cela veut dire enfin qu'il n'y a plus d'oasis à découvrir, plus de "nouvelle frontière" et que chaque conquête qui serait désormais remportée contre la nature le serait en réalité contre nous-mêmes. Le progrès n'est donc plus nécessairement compatible avec la vie; nous n'avons plus droit à la logique de l'infini; telle est la grande rupture épistémologique que symbolisera peut-être, aux yeux des historiens, "le Sommet Planète Terre".

Historique, cette réunion l'est pour une seconde raison, non moins exaltante : nous voici en effet de plain-pied avec une échelle du temps qui dépasse de beaucoup celle de nos vies individuelles. La réflexion, et surtout l'action, dont nous devons fixer ici les premiers jalons politiques, nous ne les entreprenons pas pour nous, ni même pour nos contemporains : car nous pouvons bien encore gaspiller les ressources de la planète, au rythme actuel, pendant quelques décennies! Nous pouvons encore, pendant quelques années, ou quelques décennies, vivre avec les pluies acides qui ne détruisent que lentement les forêts, les lacs, les oeuvres architecturales, et même les hommes; nous pouvons supporter que le climat s'élève peu à peu de quelques degrés, que la diversité biologique de notre planète se rétrécisse, que la pollution des eaux se poursuive, que la désertification de la planète s'accélère - il y aura toujours, pour nous, assez de forêts, assez d'eau, assez de ressources naturelles. Mais il faut savoir qu'un jour, après notre disparition comme individus, ce "laissez-faire, laissez-aller" ne sera plus possible et que, à coup sûr, après nous viendra un déluge; que pour les générations futures il sera trop tard.

Ce que nous faisons ici, par conséquent, nous le faisons pour nos petits-enfants et au-delà, pour les générations futures. Notre présence ici prouve que nous entendons faire primer le temps politique, c'est-à-dire l'histoire, sur notre histoire individuelle. Nous somme ici dans le temps long, qui se compte en décennies et en siècles. C'est la part la plus noble de l'action collective que nous entreprenons à Rio.

Historique, le moment présent l'est pour une troisième raison, qui découle des deux autres et concerne l'Organisation des Nations Unies, que j'ai l'honneur de diriger. C'est une grande épreuve que cette organisation affronte ici, et avec elle tous ceux qui ont mis leur espoir dans l'universalisme. Saurons-nous montrer que les hommes sont capables d'affronter collectivement, en passant au-dessus des querelles d'un autre âge, les défis immenses qui leur sont lancés? "Le pire est toujours sûr", a dit sous forme de boutade l'écrivain espagnol Unamuno. Cela pourrait être vrai si nous nous séparons dans une semaine sans avoir pris les décisions difficiles mais cruciales qui sont attendues de nous. Il faudra donc aller au-delà de ce qui est habituel, donner à notre système une dimension supérieure. Quelles que soient les voies empruntées, nous voici comme condamnés à nous rapprocher, ne fût-ce que d'un pas, de la planète vertueuse, "Al Maamoura Al Fadela", préconisée par le penseur islamique Al Farabi...

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Je suis tenté par l'optimisme : d'abord en songeant aux circonstances favorables que connaît la coopération internationale depuis quelques années; ensuite, en songeant à la somme d'efforts, d'imagination, d'enthousiasme que notre organisation est parvenue à susciter pour la préparation d'une telle réunion; et enfin par le rayonnement même de cette conférence. L'ONU a déjà beaucoup avancé! Depuis Stockholm, où furent débattues une partie au moins des questions que nous retrouvons aujourd'hui, les Nations Unies ont acquis une expérience, engendré des compétences, des études, des bilans, sans aucun équivalent, et qui ont eu des résonnances absolument partout dans le monde. En 1972, nous étions, souvenez-vous, des pionniers! Continuons à l'être, en nous appuyant sur les acquis et les leçons que nous tirons de nos premiers efforts. Je pense notamment à ceux du Programme des Nations Unies pour l'environnement; mais aussi aux agents d'un grand nombre d'organisations du système des Nations Unies, qui se sont efforcés de coopérer étroitement, aux organisations non gouvernementales, aux commissions indépendantes, réunissant souvent des personnalités éminentes, et à l'incomparable somme de travaux préparatoires, conférences de communautés régionales ou linguistiques, colloques, rapports, articles, ouvrages, qui ont défriché nos travaux en tous points de l'univers. Toutes ces énergies ont convergé vers Rio; qu'il me soit permis de remercier à ce sujet le Brésil, notre pays hôte, son gouvernement, et son peuple chaleureux qui nous entoure ces jours-ci, pour leur vibrante hospitalité. Depuis le début des travaux préparatoires, ils ont témoigné d'un souci sincère et actif pour la réussite de notre conférence.

Je ne peux hélas remercier tout le monde. Qu'il me soit cependant permis de citer le rapport de Mme Brundtland, dont les avancées théoriques ont été remarquées par tous; de citer aussi le Président du Comité préparatoire, l'Ambassadeur Tommy Koh, dont les talents diplomatiques furent une nouvelle fois précieux; M. Maurice Strong et son équipe, qui ont mené à bien une sorte de "treizième travail d'Hercule". Tant d'enthousiasme et de dévouement me portent à l'optimisme : "Rio, une tâche démesurée", a titré une revue. Démesurée, oui, comme le défi auquel elle répond. Car nous sommes condamnés à l'héroïsme : si nous y parvenons, l'ONU aura subi l'épreuve du feu, elle aura durablement inscrit sa marque dans l'histoire. Avant d'en venir aux actions proprement dites, telles qu'elles sont inscrites à l'ordre du jour, je voudrais dans un premier temps tenter de récapituler les avancées théoriques qui me semblent d'ores et déjà acquises.

Je ne sais pas si ce sont les idées qui mènent le monde : en tout cas rien n'est possible sans elles. Il faut donc commencer par cet effort de réflexion collective qui entre aussi dans la vocation de l'ONU - et nous armer de courage, car la réflexion a un risque : celui de nous conduire à abandonner des mythes, des conforts de pensée, des principes économiques sacrés. Notre réflexion a un dénominateur commun, le concept central de notre conférence, celui du développement. Le développement! Ce mot a connu une fortune sans égale. Et pourtant, il a acquis son plein sens je crois, à la faveur des travaux préparatoires de cette conférence. Nous savons à présent que, si nous nous montrions incapables de faire évoluer la notion de développement, nous arriverions à un paradoxe qui pourrait faire sourire s'il ne cachait tant de souffrances et de dangers : la Terre est à la fois malade du sous-développement et malade du surdéveloppement.

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Il faut donc enrichir le vieux mot de développement à la lumière des évolutions de la science, et des défis d'aujourd'hui. Je crois que d'ores et déjà cet enrichissement est acquis en deux directions : la première est ce qu'il est désormais convenu d'appeler "le développement durable"; la seconde est ce que je vous propose de nommer "le développement planétaire". Encore une fois, ces concepts concernent le monde entier, dans mon esprit, le Nord comme le Sud, l'Est comme l'Ouest...

Le développement durable, tout d'abord : il pourrait être défini comme un développement qui répond aux besoins du présent au rythme du renouvellement des ressources, c'est-à-dire qui ne compromet pas celui des générations futures. C'est un nouveau regard sur le développement, un regard neuf, qui prend en compte les conditions de sa pérennité. On se rend ainsi compte que, de même que les pays du Sud ont des problèmes de sauvegarde de l'environnement, de même les pays du Nord doivent affronter, eux aussi, les problèmes du surdéveloppement. Ces pays du Nord comme les pays du Sud ne respectent pas l'esprit du développement durable. On sait, par exemple, que le réchauffement global est provoqué par des gaz qui sont aux racines mêmes des sociétés industrialisées. Cela signifie que le style de vie des nations riches est écologiquement irrationnel et que leur développement, actuellement, ne peut être qualifié de "durable". On sait aussi que c'est dans les pays pauvres que la dégradation des ressources est la plus tragique, obligés comme ils le sont de surexploiter des ressources naturelles desquelles dépend leur survie; ils sont acculés à sacrifier l'avenir pour assurer une vie quotidienne précaire au présent.

Ainsi il faut clairement préciser un point : on ne peut protéger une ressource naturelle en refusant qu'elle soit utilisée par ceux dont la survie en dépend : le lien entre la protection de l'environnement et la pauvreté ne vise pas seulement la production à large échelle, mais aussi la vie de tous les jours, particulièrement celle des femmes qui doivent pourvoir aux besoins domestiques, d'eau ou de bois... C'est pourquoi, dans bien des pays, agir contre la pauvreté contribue à protéger l'environnement.

Cessons donc, je vous le demande, de distinguer les deux aspects d'une même question, l'économie d'un côté, l'écologie de l'autre. Toute catastrophe écologique est une catastrophe économique. Les deux mots ont d'ailleurs une racine grecque commune éco, qui signifie "la maison". M. Gorbatchev avait proposé de faire de l'Europe une "maison commune". Mais c'est l'univers entier qui est notre "maison commune"! Ecologie : oikos-logos, "science de la maison"; Economie : oikonomia, "administration de la maison". Presque la même chose!... L'écologie est par nature contenue dans l'économie.

Ce principe a des conséquences micro et macro-économiques. Il a des conséquences notamment sur le mode de fixation des prix : puisque la dégradation de l'environnement provoque une perte du capital social, ainsi que des coûts sociaux, il faut prendre en compte cette perte, au même titre que l'amortissement d'un investissement. La nature étant désormais entièrement entre les mains de l'homme, il est normal de la considérer non plus comme une donnée, mais comme un acquis, un investissement, sans cesse à renouveler, à

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amortir, au même titre que les autres coûts, salaires, frais financiers, matières premières... En incluant le "coût nature", on fait plus encore que protéger les ressources pour le long terme; on améliore la qualité et la durée des produits, on recycle les déchets et finalement on économise. Produire, consommer, mais aussi recycler : c'est le triptyque de l'avenir!

Je voudrais donc insister sur cette seconde avancée théorique qui découle de la première, qu'on l'appelle "la nouvelle sécurité collective" ou le "développement planétaire".

De tous temps, les hommes ont dû faire face à des menaces pesant sur leur sécurité. Mais la sécurité évolue. Pour aller vite, je dirais qu'elle est de moins en moins une affaire militaire - puisque, dans un monde en voie d'unification, toute guerre devient une sorte de guerre civile! - ayant une dimension "économico-écologique". Voyons bien ce que cela signifie : cela signifie d'abord qu'une partie des dépenses dites "de sécurité", au sens ancien, c'est-à-dire des dépenses militaires, doivent impérativement être reconverties vers des projets de développement planétaire. Le développement planétaire implique aussi des mécanismes de conversion des dettes vers des projets d'environnement. Enfin, le développement planétaire suppose un troisième ordre d'efforts : des transferts de moyens technologiques et financiers - notamment inspirés du principe "pollueur-payeur". Sur ce chapitre les projets ne manquent pas, qui incluent quelquefois la création ou le renforcement d'institutions ou, à tout le moins, de mécanismes de distribution, entre lesquels il ne m'appartient pas de choisir, mais dont les avantages et les inconvénients doivent être discutés avec le souci constant de parvenir à des résultats clairs et concrets.

Car il faut absolument, Mesdames et Messieurs, des résultats concrets! Je suis conscient, certes, que quelques-uns au moins de ces résultats peuvent à l'occasion heurter des intérêts établis et des intérêts puissants; qu'il me soit permis de dire cependant que ces intérêts doivent aussi, comme les autres, se préoccuper de l'avenir à long terme, et qu'ils doivent tenir compte de la force propre du sentiment d'égalité animant tous les peuples de la planète, comme tout simplement, de la nécessité : il est certain que l'on a d'autant plus de responsabilités que l'on est plus riche et que, pour ce qui est des financements comme des technologies, les pays du Nord et d'abord leurs opinions publiques - c'est à elles que je m'adresse en cet instant - doivent comprendre que leur effort est indispensable. C'est cela que j'ai appelé le développement planétaire, complément du développement durable. Et c'est tout cela le "nouveau développement" : un esprit, et quelques principes de travail. Nouveau, oui, il doit l'être quant au regard que les humains portent sur les choses, les plantes, les animaux, du simple gobelet d'eau que l'on jette après une gorgée distraite, jusqu'aux animaux dont le nombre des espèces se réduit dramatiquement. Tout cela, les richesses du monde, nous ne les possédons pas, comme l'a écrit Saint-Exupéry, "nous les empruntons à nos enfants".

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I will now turn briefly to some of the specific issues on your agenda. My friend and colleague, Maurice Strong, the Secretary-General of the Conference, will comment on the items in greater detail.

The progress made so far in reaching agreement on "Agenda 21" is a remarkable achievement. It demonstrates universal good will, as well as the importance attached to this ambitious instrument. Agenda 21 will remain a key point of reference for the rest of the decade for Governments and international organizations, as well as the non-governmental community and the public at large.

I am also pleased that the Preparatory Committee was able to transmit to you by consensus the "Rio Declaration". This provides an important political framework for the major programme of action embodied in Agenda 21. I hope that you will be able to adopt this Declaration here, and that if the reservations expressed by some Governments require that you negotiate it further, the results of your efforts will enhance its content.

More generally, I am pleased that the Preparatory Committee succeeded in reaching agreement on so many important issues. It will be your task to resolve those issues which could not be negotiated by the Preparatory Committee and refine those on which only a broad understanding was reached.

One such issue is that of resource transfer. I know that figures have been suggested as to the total amount of additional resources required by developing countries. What is needed in the first instance is political will. If that is forthcoming, the necessary resources should follow, even if the complete financial package is not available immediately. I hope that by the end of this Conference a first decisive step will have been taken which will visibly demonstrate the collective good will and firm intention of donor countries to launch the concept of planetary development.

I believe that the question of technology transfer must be viewed from the same standpoint. The developing countries must have access to the necessary technologies in order to embark on the new age of planetary development. The issue is not merely one of transferring know-how from one country to another, or one enterprise to another. It is a question of building up capacities, both technological and institutional. It is a question of ensuring cooperative research on science and technology. I urge you to give special attention to achieving progress on this critical issue.

I also hope that the progress made on the very important question of forests, more specifically the draft principles on this issue, will crystallize here into an agreement. These principles are, in my view, a perfect microcosm of environment and development issues in general. The progress already made on this issue again demonstrates the willingness of all Governments to find a workable compromise in an area where positions are difficult to reconcile.

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Lastly, I should like to congratulate Governments on the agreements reached on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity, both of which will shortly be opened here for signature. I should like to take this opportunity particularly to commend Jean Ripert and Ambassador Vicente Sanchez for the exceptional efforts they made to promote a successful outcome.

I know the negotiations which produced these texts were long and complex and sometimes controversial. Let us not forget, however, that both represent a first for the earth. In the case of biodiversity, the Convention clearly reaffirms the fact that we, the community of nations, are committed to conserving the work of creation and not unravelling it. It represents a turning point in the protection of the life forms that nourish the earth.

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change launches a process of cooperation, aimed at keeping greenhouse gases in the atmosphere within safe limits. The initial level of commitment is not as high as many would have wished. But a low threshold should maximize participation -- which is one condition for effectiveness. And the process of policy review should improve commitments over time. States are now looking to the United Nations to organize the immediate follow-up work. This demonstrates that this Organization can well serve the needs of Member States in dealing with fundamental issues of economy and ecology affecting real national interests.

I have said that this is an historical moment. However, it will only be so if our efforts on behalf of the planet endure. It will only be so if the Rio Conference, the culmination of long deliberations, also marks a new beginning. And by this I mean a new point of departure for the United Nations system; for action by States; and for the mobilization of all peoples of the world.

Secretariat preparations for this Conference have involved the whole of the United Nations system, in a truly inter-agency endeavour. The same approaches must guide and inspire the follow-up to the Conference.

The role of the United Nations system in the implementation of the results of the Conference was thoroughly reviewed at a recent meeting -- the first held under my chairmanship -- of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, the body which brings together the executive heads of all the specialized agencies of the United Nations system, under the leadership of the Secretary-General. The Committee is keenly aware of the great responsibilities which devolve on it in this regard.

Individual agencies regard the follow-up to the Conference both as a major challenge and as an important new opportunity for progress in their respective fields of competence -- be it the promotion of health, food and agriculture, the advancement of science and education, training, infrastructure-building, or the provision of finance for development.

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Equally important, the follow-up to the Conference is seen by all organizations of the system as a major new opportunity for effective collective action. From this point of view, the outcome of this Conference, and more particularly Agenda 21, will provide a common point of reference in ensuring that agency actions in different sectors -- and the capacities available to the ensemble of the system for research and policy analysis, finance for development, and technical assistance -- truly complement and reinforce each other in promoting the cause of sustained and sustainable development.

Advancing those objectives -- harnessing the full potential of the United Nations system to meet the critical challenges of the future -- will be one of my major concerns throughout my term of office.

At the same time, I cannot emphasize too strongly that States will be the principal instruments for the implementation of the decisions and guidelines adopted here. Moreover, the protection of the planet must be a universal effort involving all those living on it.

In this context, it is especially encouraging that the preparatory work for this Conference has been characterized by such close cooperation between countries at different stages of development and between Governments and the scientific and academic communities and non-governmental actors. These networks will have to be maintained and strengthened.

In this area of sustainable development, more than in other areas, we are in a situation where we have to take action in the face of uncertainty. This is because we do not fully understand how ecosystems function, because we have sometimes to work to a very long time-scale, and because cause and effect are often separated in space. It will therefore be important to ensure that emerging opinions among scientists and experts receive full attention in decision-making processes. We have to find innovative ways of promoting a dialogue between science and politics in the context of the follow-up to this Conference.

I wish in the same context to pay special tribute to the non-governmental community. Over a thousand non-governmental organizations are accredited to the Conference. They have contributed a great deal to the preparatory process -- they have worked hard and expect a lot from your deliberations. They should also have a critical role in the follow-up.

These organizations represent the peoples of the world whose voice is so clearly heard in the Preamble to the United Nations Charter. They represent men and women -- and I note that there is an article 20 of the draft Declaration which rightly focuses on women -- managers and workers, writers and artists, and individuals from all walks of life.

I see this Conference as a vast planet-wide endeavour. During the preparatory process, actors of all kinds -- national and local authorities, producers and consumers, community groups and many more -- were involved in forging the consensus which this Conference must now cement. It is only through action by every one of us living on this planet -- that we will succeed in achieving our goals.

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Our Rio meeting has already aroused unprecedented interest throughout the world. It has captured the imagination of people everywhere.

As Secretary-General, new to the job but none the less well aware of the constraints on the powers of Governments, and indeed of international organizations, my hope is that what I may call the "spirit of Rio" -- that is, the spirit of Planet Earth -- will spread throughout the world. The "spirit of Rio" must embody the full awareness of the fragility of our planet. The "spirit of Rio" must lead us to think constantly of the future, our children's future.

That is why, in opening this Conference, I am very moved when I wish you success in your work. Let me end with these few simple words: never will so much depend on what you do or do not do here -- for yourselves, for others, for your children and grandchildren, for the planet -- for life in all its interdependent forms.

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United Nations

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SECRETARY-GENRAL, IN STATEMENT TO ENVIRONMENT/DEVELOPMENT MEETING, STRESSES NEED FOR FULL AWARENESS OF PLANET'S FRAGILITY

The following is the text of the statement made today by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali at the opening meeting of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil:

In the subjects we shall discuss during the Conference which I have the great honour to open at this moment, nothing could be more risky than to succumb to the power of words and to limit ourselves to that. Nothing would be more dangerous than to believe or to give the impression that just because things are said, the challenges have been met. And yet I do not think that I am succumbing to the power of words in saying that this is an historic moment. Historic -- yes, I believe that it is, and I would put forward three reasons for this -- each one in itself capable of moving us greatly as this Conference, which the entire world will follow, begins.

Let us try to grasp, first of all, what this Earth Summit means: here we have a gathering of nations, united before us, represented at the highest level by their leaders, supported by an exceptional rallying of peoples, and determined to reflect -- and then act -- in concert to protect their planet. This meeting is proof that we have understood how very fragile our Earth -- and the life it shelters -- is: this is the first reason, then, why it is historic and reflects a radical change in the way man looks at himself.

In the past, the individual was surrounded by nature so abundant that its immensity was terrifying. This was still true at the beginning of this century. All victories have been victories over nature, from the wild beasts menacing the cavemen to the distances separating communities. The wild beasts have been conquered, and so have the distances, and taking both these conquests into account, we can say that all of science has grown out of the conflict between man and nature, with man moving forward by gradually taming an infinite nature.

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* Revised to include English translation of that portion of the Secretary-General's statement delivered in French.

Yet, "the time of the finite world" has come, a world in which we are "under house arrest": what this means is simply that nature no longer exists in the classic sense of the term, and that henceforth nature lies within the hands of man. It also means that man has triumphed over his environment, a triumph nevertheless fraught with danger ... Finally, it means that there are no more oases to discover, no more "new frontiers", and that every new triumph over nature will in fact be a triumph over ourselves. Progress, then, is not necessarily compatible with life; we may no longer take the logic of the infinite for granted. It is this great epistemological break which the "Earth Summit" may ultimately symbolize for historians.

This meeting is historic for a second, no less exalting, reason: we are looking at a time-frame that extends far beyond the span of our individual lives. The reflection and, especially the action for which we are to lay the political foundation here will not be undertaken for ourselves, or even for our contemporaries. For we can still waste the planet's resources, at our current pace, for a few decades more. We can still live, for a few years or a few decades more, with the acid rain that is only gradually destroying our forests, lakes, works of architecture and even ourselves; we can stand it if the climate heats up by a few degrees, if the biological diversity of our planet diminishes, if the pollution of our waters continues, if the desertification of the planet accelerates -- we will always have enough forests, enough water, enough natural resources. But we must realize that one day, when we as individuals have ceased to exist, it will no longer be possible to let things go on, or let things go, and that, ultimately, the storm will break on the heads of future generations. For them, it will be too late.

What we do here, then, we do for our grandchildren and, beyond, for future generations. Our presence here is proof that we intend to give precedence to time in the political sense -- that is, history -- over our own personal history. We are here for the long term, which is calculated in decades and centuries. This is the noblest aspect of our collective efforts at Rio.

This moment is historic for a third reason, which derives from the other two and has to do with the United Nations, which it is my honour to head. It is a huge task which the Organization, together with all those who have placed their hope in universalism, is tackling here. Will we be able to show that men are capable of rising above the conflicts of a different era to work together to tackle the immense challenges that have been handed them? "The worst is always certain", quipped the Spanish writer Unamuno. This might be true if we were to leave in a week's time without having taken the difficult but crucial decisions that are expected of us. We must therefore go beyond the norm and bring our system to a higher plane. By whatever means, we are in a sense condemned here to moving closer, even if by only a step, to the virtuous planet, "al-ma'mura al-fadila" anticipated by the Islamic philosopher Al-Farabi ...

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I am inclined towards optimism: first, when I think of the positive developments that have taken place in international cooperation in the past few years; then, when I think of all the efforts, imagination and enthusiasm our Organization has managed to elicit in the preparation of this meeting; and, finally, by the extent of the influence that this meeting has. The United Nations has come a long way. In the time since Stockholm, where at least some of the issues that we will deal with today were discussed, the United Nations has acquired experience and produced unparalleled talent, studies and assessments which have had an impact in virtually every part of the world. Remember, in 1972 we were pioneers. Let us continue to be pioneers by building on the achievements and lessons we have learned from our earlier efforts. I am thinking in particular of those undertaken by the United Nations Environment Programme, but also of those coming from a great many organizations within the United Nations system, which have endeavoured to cooperate closely, and from non-governmental organizations and independent commissions, often bringing together eminent persons, and the unprecedented amount of preparatory work, conferences of regional or linguistic groups, seminars, reports, articles and books which have paved the way for our efforts throughout the world. All this energy has converged on Rio; in this context, allow me to express appreciation to Brazil, our host country, and to its Government and its warm-hearted people who are extending to us their vibrant hospitality. Since the beginning of the preparatory work, they have shown a sincere and ardent desire for the success of our Conference.

Unfortunately, I cannot thank everyone. However, let me at least mention Mrs. Brundtland's report, whose theoretical advances have been widely noted. Let me mention also the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee, Ambassador Tommy Koh, whose diplomatic talents have once again proved valuable, and Maurice Strong and his team, who have undertaken a kind of "thirteenth labour of Hercules". Such enthusiasm and devotion incline me towards optimism: "Rio -- an oversized job" was the headline in one review. Oversized, yes, like the challenge to which it is responding. For we are condemned to heroism: if we succeed, the United Nations will have undergone trial by fire; the Organization will have inscribed its name permanently in history. However, before I turn to the action that is set out in the agenda, I should first like to recapitulate the theoretical advances which, it seems to me, have come to be generally accepted.

I do not know whether ideas make the world go round; in any event, nothing is possible without them. We must begin, then, by an act of collective reflection, which is also part of the work of the United Nations, and we must equip ourselves with courage, for reflection entails a risk: the risk that we will be forced to give up myths, comfortable ways of thinking, sacred economic principles. Our reflection has a common denominator, which is the central concept of our Conference, and that is development. Development! The term has enjoyed unprecedented glory. Yet, it has been through the preparatory work for this Conference that the term has taken on its full meaning. We now know that if we prove unable to expand the concept of development further, we will find ourselves confronted with a paradox that

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would make us smile if it did not mask so much suffering and danger: the earth is simultaneously suffering from underdevelopment and from overdevelopment.

We must therefore expand the meaning of the term "development" as we know it in the light of scientific developments and the challenges that face us today. I believe that in the future, this expansion will take place in two directions: the first is towards what we now call "sustainable development"; the second is towards what I propose to call "planetary development". Once again, in my mind these concepts concern the entire world, North and South, East and West.

Let us take sustainable development first: it may be defined as development that meets the needs of the present as long as resources are renewed or, in other words, that does not compromise the development of future generations. This is a new way of looking at development, one which takes into account its persistence. It forces us to realize that, just as the countries of the South face problems in protecting the environment, the countries of the North must likewise deal with the problems of overdevelopment. The countries of the North, like the countries of the South, fail to respect the spirit of sustainable development. We know, for example, that global warming is caused by the gases which constitute the very underpinnings of industrialized societies. This means that the lifestyle of rich countries is ecologically unsound, and that their development cannot, at the present stage, be considered "sustainable". We also know that it is in the poor countries that the depletion of resources is most serious, given that those countries are obliged to overwork the natural resources on which their survival depends. They are compelled to sacrifice their future to eke out a precarious daily existence in the present.

Thus, one point must be clearly stated: one cannot protect a natural resource by denying its use to those who depend on it for survival: the link between environmental protection and poverty does not only concern large-scale production, but also everyday life, particularly that of women, who have to provide for domestic needs, for water or wood. That is why, in many countries action against poverty helps protect the environment.

Let us stop, then, making a distinction between two aspects of the same question -- economy on the one hand and ecology on the other. Any ecological disaster is an economic disaster. Moreover, the two words have a common Greek root, "oiko", meaning "home". Mr. Gorbachev suggested that Europe should become a "common home". Yet, the entire universe is our "common home". Ecology comes from the Greek "oikos-logos", that is, "the science of the home"; economy comes from the Greek "oikonomia", that is, "good management of the home". They amount to the same thing; ecology is, by its very nature, part of economy.

This principle has both micro- and macroeconomic implications. It has consequences for pricing in particular: since environmental degradation entails a loss of social capital, as well as social costs, this loss must be taken into account in the same way that an investment is amortized. As nature

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is now entirely in man's hands, it is quite normal to consider it, no longer as a given but as an acquisition, an investment which must constantly be rolled over, amortized just like other costs, salaries, financial expenditures and raw materials. By including "nature costs", we are doing more than protecting resources in the long term; we are enhancing the quality and durability of goods, we are recycling waste and, ultimately, we are saving. Produce, consume, but recycle, too: these are three key concepts for the future.

I should like to emphasize this second theoretical advance which follows from the first, whether we call it "the new collective security" or "planetary development".

Since time immemorial, mankind has had to face threats to its security. Security evolves, however. To put it simply, I would say that it is now becoming less and less a military matter -- since in a world in the process of unification any war is, in a way, a kind of civil war -- and is, instead acquiring an economic and ecological dimension. Let us see what this means. First of all, it means that a portion of so-called "security" spending in the old sense of the word, in other words military spending, must be redirected towards planetary development projects. Secondly, planetary development means debt for environment swaps. Lastly, planetary development involves a third level of effort: transfers of technology and financing, based, inter alia, on the "polluter pays" principle. Here, projects abound which sometimes include the creation or strengthening of institutions or, at the least, of distribution mechanisms. It is not up to me to indicate a preference among them, but their advantages and drawbacks must be discussed, keeping ever present the need to arrive at clear and concrete results.

For we absolutely must achieve concrete results. I realize, of course, that some at least of these results may occasionally clash with powerful vested interests. Let me say, however, that these interests, like the others, must show concern for the long-term future and take into account the inherent force of the feeling of equality that moves all peoples of the planet and, quite simply, the force of necessity. There can be no question that the wealthier one is, the more responsibilities one has, and that the countries of the North, first and foremost public opinion in those countries -- and it is to that public opinion that I am now talking -- must realize that their efforts are essential as regards both financing and technology. This is what I meant by planetary development, the complement to sustainable development, and the "new development" is all this: a spirit and certain working principles. This new spirit must infuse the way in which human beings look at things, at plants, at animals, from the glassful of water discarded after a casual sip to the animals whose species are dwindling rapidly in number. All these, the world's riches, are not something we own but, as Saint-Exupéry wrote, something we have on loan from our children.

I will now turn briefly to some of the specific issues on your agenda. My friend and colleague, Maurice Strong, the Secretary-General of the Conference, will comment on the items in greater detail.

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The progress made so far in reaching agreement on "Agenda 21" is a remarkable achievement. It demonstrates universal good will, as well as the importance attached to this ambitious instrument. Agenda 21 will remain a key point of reference for the rest of the decade for Governments and international organizations, as well as the non-governmental community and the public at large.

I am also pleased that the Preparatory Committee was able to transmit to you by consensus the "Rio Declaration". This provides an important political framework for the major programme of action embodied in Agenda 21. I hope that you will be able to adopt this Declaration here, and that if the reservations expressed by some Governments require that you negotiate it further, the results of your efforts will enhance its content.

More generally, I am pleased that the Preparatory Committee succeeded in reaching agreement on so many important issues. It will be your task to resolve those issues which could not be negotiated by the Preparatory Committee and refine those on which only a broad understanding was reached.

One such issue is that of resource transfer. I know that figures have been suggested as to the total amount of additional resources required by developing countries. What is needed in the first instance is political will. If that is forthcoming, the necessary resources should follow, even if the complete financial package is not available immediately. I hope that by the end of this Conference a first decisive step will have been taken which will visibly demonstrate the collective good will and firm intention of donor countries to launch the concept of planetary development.

I believe that the question of technology transfer must be viewed from the same standpoint. The developing countries must have access to the necessary technologies in order to embark on the new age of planetary development. The issue is not merely one of transferring know-how from one country to another, or one enterprise to another. It is a question of building up capacities, both technological and institutional. It is a question of ensuring cooperative research on science and technology. I urge you to give special attention to achieving progress on this critical issue.

I also hope that the progress made on the very important question of forests, more specifically the draft principles on this issue, will crystallize here into an agreement. These principles are, in my view, a perfect microcosm of environment and development issues in general. The progress already made on this issue again demonstrates the willingness of all Governments to find a workable compromise in an area where positions are difficult to reconcile.

Lastly, I should like to congratulate Governments on the agreements reached on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity, both of which will shortly be opened here for signature. I should like to take this opportunity particularly to commend Jean Ripert and Ambassador Vicente Sanchez for the exceptional efforts they made to promote a successful outcome.

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I know the negotiations which produced these texts were long and complex and sometimes controversial. Let us not forget, however, that both represent a first for the earth. In the case of biodiversity, the Convention clearly reaffirms the fact that we, the community of nations, are committed to conserving the work of creation and not unravelling it. It represents a turning point in the protection of the life forms that nourish the earth.

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change launches a process of cooperation, aimed at keeping greenhouse gases in the atmosphere within safe limits. The initial level of commitment is not as high as many would have wished. But a low threshold should maximize participation -- which is one condition for effectiveness. And the process of policy review should improve commitments over time. States are now looking to the United Nations to organize the immediate follow-up work. This demonstrates that this Organization can well serve the needs of Member States in dealing with fundamental issues of economy and ecology affecting real national interests.

I have said that this is an historical moment. However, it will only be so if our efforts on behalf of the planet endure. It will only be so if the Rio Conference, the culmination of long deliberations, also marks a new beginning. And by this I mean a new point of departure for the United Nations system; for action by States; and for the mobilization of all peoples of the world.

Secretariat preparations for this Conference have involved the whole of the United Nations system, in a truly inter-agency endeavour. The same approaches must guide and inspire the follow-up to the Conference.

The role of the United Nations system in the implementation of the results of the Conference was thoroughly reviewed at a recent meeting -- the first held under my chairmanship -- of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, the body which brings together the executive heads of all the specialized agencies of the United Nations system, under the leadership of the Secretary-General. The Committee is keenly aware of the great responsibilities which devolve on it in this regard.

Individual agencies regard the follow-up to the Conference both as a major challenge and as an important new opportunity for progress in their respective fields of competence -- be it the promotion of health, food and agriculture, the advancement of science and education, training, infrastructure-building, or the provision of finance for development.

Equally important, the follow-up to the Conference is seen by all organizations of the system as a major new opportunity for effective collective action. From this point of view, the outcome of this Conference, and more particularly Agenda 21, will provide a common point of reference in ensuring that agency actions in different sectors -- and the capacities available to the ensemble of the system for research and policy analysis,

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finance for development, and technical assistance -- truly complement and reinforce each other in promoting the cause of sustained and sustainable development.

Advancing those objectives -- harnessing the full potential of the United Nations system to meet the critical challenges of the future -- will be one of my major concerns throughout my term of office.

At the same time, I cannot emphasize too strongly that States will be the principal instruments for the implementation of the decisions and guidelines adopted here. Moreover, the protection of the planet must be a universal effort involving all those living on it.

In this context, it is especially encouraging that the preparatory work for this Conference has been characterized by such close cooperation between countries at different stages of development and between Governments and the scientific and academic communities and non-governmental actors. These networks will have to be maintained and strengthened.

In this area of sustainable development, more than in other areas, we are in a situation where we have to take action in the face of uncertainty. This is because we do not fully understand how ecosystems function, because we have sometimes to work to a very long time-scale, and because cause and effect are often separated in space. It will therefore be important to ensure that emerging opinions among scientists and experts receive full attention in decision-making processes. We have to find innovative ways of promoting a dialogue between science and politics in the context of the follow-up to this Conference.

I wish in the same context to pay special tribute to the non-governmental community. Over a thousand non-governmental organizations are accredited to the Conference. They have contributed a great deal to the preparatory process -- they have worked hard and expect a lot from your deliberations. They should also have a critical role in the follow-up.

These organizations represent the peoples of the world whose voice is so clearly heard in the Preamble to the United Nations Charter. They represent men and women -- and I note that there is an article 20 of the draft Declaration which rightly focuses on women -- managers and workers, writers and artists, and individuals from all walks of life.

I see this Conference as a vast planet-wide endeavour. During the preparatory process, actors of all kinds -- national and local authorities, producers and consumers, community groups and many more -- were involved in forging the consensus which this Conference must now cement. It is only through action by every one of us living on this planet -- that we will succeed in achieving our goals.

Our Rio meeting has already aroused unprecedented interest throughout the world. It has captured the imagination of people everywhere.

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As Secretary-General, new to the job but none the less well aware of the constraints on the powers of Governments, and indeed of international organizations, my hope is that what I may call the "spirit of Rio" -- that is, the spirit of Planet Earth -- will spread throughout the world. The "spirit of Rio" must embody the full awareness of the fragility of our planet. The "spirit of Rio" must lead us to think constantly of the future, our children's future.

That is why, in opening this Conference, I am very moved when I wish you success in your work. Let me end with these few simple words: never will so much depend on what you do or do not do here -- for yourselves, for others, for your children and grandchildren, for the planet -- for life in all its interdependent forms.

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United Nations

Press Release

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UN CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT BEGINS IN RIO DE JANEIRO;

BRAZILIAN PRESIDENT FERNANDO COLLOR ELECTED CONFERENCE PRESIDENT

Opening Meeting Addressed by King of Sweden; Presidents of Brazil, Portugal; Prime Minister of Norway; UN Secretary-General; Conference Secretary-General

(Received from a UN Information Officer.)

RIO DE JANEIRO, 3 June -- United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, opening the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) at Riocentro Convention Centre in Rio de Janeiro this morning, said the meeting was proof that all understood how very fragile the earth was, and the Conference reflected a radical change in the way humanity viewed itself.

Also addressing the meeting were King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden (host country to the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, convened 20 years ago in Stockholm; President Fernando Collor of Brazil; President Mario Soares of Portugal; Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland of Norway; United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali and Conference Secretary-General Maurice Strong.

At the two-week Conference, which will conclude on 14 June, delegates will take up the challenges of a viable and equitable balance between environment and development and a sustainable future for the earth and its people.

More than 100 Heads of State and Government will consider for adoption a Rio Declaration on Environment and Development; "Agenda 21", a blueprint for action for the sustainable development of planet earth into the twenty-first century; and a set of principles on the world's forests. They are also expected to sign a United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and a Framework Convention on Biological Diversity.

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali told the representatives of 178 Member States, international and non-governmental organizations that the "time

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For information media--not an official record

of the finite world" had come, that every new triumph over nature would be "a triumph over ourselves". What would be achieved at Rio would be for future generations. He called for collective efforts and reflection at Rio, the common denominator of which was development, in particular, "sustainable development" and "plenary development".

President Collor of Brazil, who was also elected President of the Conference, said mankind owed itself the convening of UNCED because of the abusive consumption of nature and its resources, widespread pollution, the damage caused by world and regional wars, the stockpiling of nuclear and chemical weapons and the failure of the predatory models of development.

The Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Strong, said that perhaps the most important common ground to be arrived at in Rio was the understanding that "we are all in this together". Either the whole world would be saved, or no one would be saved. If the agreements reached at the Conference did not serve the common interest of the entire human family, an historic opportunity will have been missed, one which might never recur. "We have been the most successful species ever; we are now a species out of control."

King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden said the future was "in our hands" and for that reason it was a privilege to convey a message of concern and hope from his country, host of the 1972 Conference on the Human Environment -- concern because global threats were more serious than ever, and hope because for the first time in history all the nations of the world were gathered to discuss the twin problems of environment and development.

Prime Minister Brundtland of Norway, Chairman of the World Commission on Environment and Development, said time was short to rectify the present unsustainable patterns of human development. A global partnership must start with a commitment by the industrial countries to reduce sharply the burden they imposed on the earth's ecosystems by their unsustainable consumption and production patterns.

President Soares of Portugal said that at a time when there was talk about the end of ideologies, it was encouraging to see the idealism that UNCED had generated among youth. That was, in a way, a rebirth of "utopia", meaning a belief in the capacity of mankind to take its fate in its own hands.

Also this morning, the Conference elected 30 Vice-Presidents, as follows: 12 from African States, four from Eastern European States, seven from Latin American and Caribbean States, and seven from Western European and Other States. The election of nine Vice-Presidents from Asian States will be held at 3 p.m. tomorrow, 4 June, by secret ballot.

Those elected today were: Argentina, Barbados, Benin, Canada, Costa Rica, France, Gabon, Germany, Guinea-Bissau, Ireland, Jamaica, Kenya, Mauritania, Mexico, Mozambique, Nigeria, Peru, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Senegal, Switzerland, Tunisia, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United

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Republic of Tanzania, United States, Venezuela, Zaire and Zimbabwe. In addition, Celso Lafer, Minister of External Relations of Brazil, was elected an ex-officio Vice-President.

Elected Rapporteur-General of the Conference was Lakhadar Brahimi, Foreign Minister of Algeria. Tommy Koh (Singapore) was elected Chairman of the Main Committee.

In other action this morning, the Conference adopted its rules of procedure.

The Conference endorsed the recommendations of the pre-Conference consultations concerning the organization of work, including the establishment of the Main Committee, as well as arrangements for the signature of Conventions, the concluding events and the report of the Conference.

Appointed to the Credentials Committee were Belgium, Belize, Chile, China, Lesotho, Russian Federation, Singapore, Togo and the United States.

Statement by UN Secretary-General

United Nations Secretary-General BOUTROS BOUTROS-GHALI, opening the Conference, said the present meeting was proof that all understood how very fragile the earth was. That was why the Conference was historic and reflected a radical change in the way humanity viewed itself.

The "time of the finite world" had come, a world in which "we are 'under house arrest'", the Secretary-General continued. That meant nature no longer existed in the classic sense and now lay within the hands of humanity; that humanity had triumphed over its environment, a triumph nevertheless fraught with danger; and that there were no more oases to discover, no more "new frontiers"; and that every new triumph over nature would be "a triumph over ourselves". Progress was not necessarily compatible with life; the logic of the infinite could no longer be taken for granted.

This meeting was historic, also, because man was looking at a time-frame that extended beyond the span of individual lives, the Secretary-General said. The action for which the political foundation was being prepared would not be undertaken for present generations. "For we can still waste the planet's resources, at our current pace, for a few decades more".

What would be achieved here, the Secretary-General said, would be "for our grandchildren and, beyond, for future generations". The presence of everyone here was proof that they intended to give precedence over their own personal history. "We are here for the long term, which is calculated in decades and centuries. This is the noblest aspect of our collective efforts at Rio."

The Conference was also historic in that it was a huge task which the United Nations was tackling, the Secretary-General stated. By whatever means, nations were in a sense "condemned here to moving closer, even if by only a

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step, to the virtuous planet". But he was optimistic because of the positive developments that had taken place in international cooperation in the past few years.

Nothing was possible without ideas, the Secretary-General continued, as he called for collective reflection. Such reflection had a common denominator -- development. The term "development" had enjoyed unprecedented glory, yet it was through the preparatory work for the Conference that it had taken on its full meaning. If nations proved unable to expand the concept of development further, they would find themselves confronted with a dangerous paradox, namely that the earth was simultaneously suffering from underdevelopment and from overdevelopment.

In the future, the meaning of development must be expanded in two directions: "sustainable development" and "planetary development", he went on to say. Sustainable development was development which met the needs of the present as long as resources were renewed, or which did not compromise the development of future generations. It forced nations to realize that just as the countries of the South faced problems in protecting the environment, the countries of the North must likewise deal with the problems of overdevelopment. Both failed to respect the spirit of sustainable development, he said.

One could not protect a natural resource by denying its use to those who depended on it for survival, the Secretary-General said, pointing out that the link between environmental protection and poverty did not only concern large-scale production, but also everyday life, particularly that of women, who had to provide for domestic needs, for water or wood. That was why, in many countries, action against poverty helped protect the environment. Thus, ecology and economy were two aspects of the same question. Ecology was, by its very nature, part of economy.

He said the issue of security today was becoming less and less a military matter, acquiring instead an economic and ecological dimension. That meant a portion of so-called "security" spending, in the military sense, must be redirected towards planetary development.

Concrete results must be achieved, the Secretary-General said. While he realized that some of those results might occasionally clash with powerful vested interests, those interests must show concern for the long-term future. There could be no question that the wealthier one was, the more responsibilities one had, and that the countries of the North must realize that their efforts were essential as regards both financing and technology.

He said the same approaches involved in the preparations for the Conference, which had been a truly inter-agency endeavour, must guide and inspire the follow-up to the Conference. Individual agencies regarded the follow-up as a major challenge and as an important new opportunity for progress in their respective fields of competence, and as a major new opportunity for effective collective action.

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From that point of view, the outcome of the Conference would provide a common point of reference in ensuring that agency actions truly complemented and reinforced each other in promoting the cause of sustained and sustainable development. Advancing those objectives would be one of the major concerns throughout his term of office, he said.

(For the full text of the Secretary-General's statement, see Press Release SG/SM/4762/Rev.1-ENV/DEV/123/Rev.1, issued today.)

Statement by President of Brazil

FERNANDO COLLOR, the President of Brazil, said he belonged to the generation that had first launched a warning against a mode of growth that was leading blindly to the extinction of life on earth, and as President he had promised to give priority and urgency to environmental issues. Opening the Rio Conference he felt the emotion of a person fulfilling a commitment to this contemporaries, fellow countrymen and the international community.

As indicated by the Conference's title, he went on, the international community was meeting at Rio to make progress in a cooperative task based on two fundamental ideas: environment and development. "We accept the historic challenge and the ethical obligation of forging a new model in which progress will be necessarily synonymous with well-being for all and with preservation of nature." It was not possible to have an environmentally sound planet in a socially unjust world.

What the international community was striving to attain in a harmonious manner was the aspirations combined in the expression "sustainable development", he said, the key concept which must bring together rich and poor countries so that prosperity might be achieved and distances that still separated those countries shortened. A "gross domestic well-being indicator" -- combining data on national revenues with elements that effectively translated the degree of self-fulfilment of peoples, including freedom and social harmony, cultural diversity, racial integration and respect for the environment -- should replace the present gross national product (GNP) and gross domestic product (GDP) indicators.

Addressing important decisions taken by Brazil regarding the environment, he referred to measures that had brought about a substantial reduction of deforestation in the Amazon region as well as to the demarcation of lands occupied by Indian communities, including the more than 94,000 square kilometres of the Yanomami people. Serious and persistent problems still remained which required international action and solidarity, the most resilient of them being poverty and lack of opportunities. "I must say on behalf of all those still forced to live in poverty, that we can and we must ask from rich countries a greater proof of brotherhood." Without a global order with greater justice, there would be tranquil prosperity for no one. The struggle to reduce inequalities must be a permanent cause.

Reviewing the preparatory work for the Conference, he said the road from Stockholm 72 to Rio 92 had been a source of inspiration. From Rio, the leap

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into the future would be greater than 20 years ago as the world community was now freed from the chains of the cold war. "We can now tackle in a global manner issues that are global." Because of issues such as the abusive consumption of nature and its resources, renewable or not; widespread pollution; the damage caused by world and regional wars; the stockpiling of nuclear and chemical weapons; and the failure of predatory modes of development, humanity owed itself the convening of the present Conference.

Stressing that the environment require planning in the long run, he hoped the Rio Conference would be the harbinger of a new era in which science and technology would no longer "technify" life, but would rather become more human, consolidating all that had been done to mankind's benefit and repaying the damage done to nature. The Conference should also be an exhortation to peace, as there would be no healthy environment or equitable development if a true and permanent peace among nations was not built. Such a peace must be one of fulfilment and of bounty and not simply a precarious absence of conflicts. The principle of solidarity must be implemented by the community of States.

MAURICE F. STRONG, Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, said that Brazil was an ideal place to hold the Earth Summit. Although it was one of the most industralized countries in the world, it was also home to some frontiers of the planet. The challenges that Brazil was tackling were the same issues that were being considered by the Conference.

The Conference was not a single-issue Conference, but dealt with the overall cause and effect system through which a broad range of human activities interacted to shape the future, he said. More than 178 nations had come together to take the decisions needed to rekindle the hopes of the 1972 Stockhold Conference that, despite significant progress, remained unfulfilled. The environment, natural resources and life-support systems had continued to deteriorate at levels of population and human activity that were less than they would be in the future.

He said the central issues were patterns of production and consumption in the industrial world; the explosive increase in population; deepening disparities between rich and poor; and an economic system that took no account of ecological costs or damage. "We have been the most successful species ever; we are now a species out of control", he declared. The concentration of population growth in developing countries and economic growth in the industralized countries had deepened, creating unsustainable imbalances. Population must be stabilized, and rapidly. "If we do not do it, nature will, and much more brutally."

He said the right of the poor to development could not be denied; nor should it be impeded by conditions unilaterally imposed on the financial flows or trade of developing countries. For the rich, the transition to sustainable development need not require regression. Rather it could lead to a richer life, more satisfying and secure because it was sustainable. Sustainable development was the only viable pathway to a more secure and hopeful future for rich and poor alike. The Conference must establish the foundations for effecting the transition to sustainable development. That could be done through fundamental changes in economic life and in international economic relations. Environment must be integrated into every aspect of economic policy and decision-making as well as the culture and value systems which motivated economic behaviour. The world had to face up to the dire implications of scientists' warning that the planet must soon become uninhabitable for people.

He said critically important issues remained for the Conference to resolve. Delegations should approve the 27 principles of the "Rio Declaration" in their present form and that they should serve as a basis for future negotiation of an "Earth Charter", which could be approved on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations.

Regarding Agenda 21, he urged the Conference to ensure that the agreements reached at the Summit would move beyond the positions agreed by the Governments in previous forums. The issue of new and additional financial resources to enable developing countries to implement Agenda 21 would test the degree of political will and commitment of all countries to the fundamental purposes of the Summit. The North must invest much more in progress for the developing world. Developing countries must leave the Summit with confidence that they would have the support and incentives they needed to commit to the reorientation of policies and redeployment of resources called for by Agenda 21. The new and additional funds could be channelled, at least initially, through a number of existing institutions and programmes, including an apprporiate revised Global Environmental Facility.

The transition to a more efficient energy economy away from overdependence on fossil fuels was imperative to the achievement of sustainable development, he said. The removal of trade barriers and discriminatory subsidies and large-scale reduction of developing countries' debt burdens could provide most of the new and additional resources they required to make the transition to sustainable development. Also needed were new ways of financing environment and development objectives. He urged the Conference to put on the priority agenda for the early post-Rio period such concepts as tradable emissions permits and taxes on polluting products and activities.

The world community should give special priority to the needs of Africa and to the least-developed countries everywhere. The tragedy was that "poverty and hunger persist in a world never better able to eliminate them", he said. He urged the adoption of the eradication of poverty as a central objective for the world community as it moved into the twenty-first century. He also said it was important that the countries that had comprised the former Soviet Union and Eastern and Central Europe have the international support to revitalize and rebuild their economies on an environmentally sound and sustainable basis.

He said the Conventions on Climate Change and Biodiversity represented first steps in addressing two of the most serious threats to the habitability

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of our planet. Signing them would not, in itself, be sufficient. Their real importance would depend on the extent to which they gave rise to concrete actions.

He also recommended that the Conference mandate negotiation of a convention on desertification and deterioration of arid lands, and that it negotiate the forestry principles placed before it by the Preparatory Committee. War and preparation for war were a major source of environmental damage which must be subjected to greater accountability and control, including stronger legal instruments with clear provisions for enforcement to deter future environmental aggressors.

Perhaps the most important common ground that must be arrived at in Rio was the understanding that "we are all in this together", he said. Either the whole world would be saved or no one would be saved. If the agreements reached at the Conference did not serve the common interests of the entire human family, "we will have missed a historic opportunity, one which may not recur during our time, if ever". He said it was of the highest importance that all Governments translate the decisions taken collectively at the Conference to national policies and practices, particularly the implementation of Agenda 21. Institutional changes to be made within the United Nations must provide an effective and credible basis for its continued leadership of that process.

King of Sweden's Address

KING CARL XVI GUSTAF of Sweden said "the future is in our hands" and for that reason it was a privilege to convey a message of concern from his country, host of the 1972 Conference on the Human Environment.

Progress had been uneven, he said. Global threats were more serious than ever and the developing countries continued to face enormous problems. Even though many of them had been able to improve their situations in a significant way, more than a billion people lived on the planet under conditions of unacceptable poverty.

"My message today is also a message of hope", he continued. For the first time in history all the nations of the world were meeting to discuss the twin problems of environment and development. The long view today was not an intellectual luxury, but a necessity and an opportunity. "Feeling the responsibility for coming generations adds a new dimension to our existence", he said.

Many people felt uncertain about the present world situation, he went on. Old structures were falling before new ones were ready. "But we have no choice", he said. "We don't have the option of first resolving today's problems and then tomorrow's."

Relationships between different concepts had already been underlined, he said, and those included poverty as a consequence and as a cause of environmental degradation; the connection between deforestation and

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desertification; and the link between land-based pollution of coastal waters and the deteriorating fishing economy. The key word was "integration" of reflection and action, he said.

In the North, he continued that meant the intellectual courage of admitting the interests of the developing countries and the needs for transfer of adequate and additional financial resources. Every individual must also consider other consumption patterns and lifestyles, in a long-term perspective. The long-term environmental concern should not be a threat to the business community, but an opportunity. The question of integration was vital -- the integration of the different policies, the integration of the interests of today with those of tomorrow and the integration of the global and the local.

Address by Prime Minister of Norway

GRO HARLEM BRUNDTLAND, Prime Minister of Norway and Chairman of the World Commission on Environment and Development, said time was short to rectify the present unsustainable patterns of human development. Poverty must be eradicated, there must be greater equality within and between nations, and human activities and human numbers must be reconciled with the laws of nature.

Human history has now reached a watershed where fundamental policy changes became unavoidable, she said. The more than 1 billion people who today could not meet their basic needs, the world's children and grandchildren, and the earth itself, all cried out for a revolution. An opportunity existed to head off the danger, disorder and conflict which might otherwise be inevitable. A sharp reduction in the arms race and the expected peace dividend could be used to finance environmental security. A new form of "collective engagement" was needed, not only to stabilize new East-West relations, but to establish a new North-South relationship based on mutual enlightened self-interest.

All Governments would be held accountable for any failure in Rio, she said. A global partnership must start with a commitment by the industrial countries to reduce sharply the burden they imposed on the carrying capacity of the earth's ecosystems by their unsustainable consumption and production patterns. It should surprise no one that developing nations were approaching the Rio Summit with open economic demands. For them, it was essentially a conference about development and justice. Poverty, environment and population could no longer be dealt with as separate issues; they were interlinked in practice and could not be delinked in the formulation of policies.

She said sustainable development could be advanced only by an international trading system which enlarged freedom of market access, especially for developing countries, and which incorporated environmental values. A decade after the debt crisis broke in Latin America, many developing countries were unable to escape the onerous burden of foreign debt. It was imperative that further debt relief be given, particularly to the low-income countries.

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At the Earth Summit, human society should rise to the challenge that confronted it, she said. Within the United Nations system, the General Assembly should act as the supreme policy-making forum for sustainable development. She urged the world's leaders to commit their peoples to securing human survival. Narrowly focused national priorities would only hamper progress and stand in the way. Nations could temporarily immunize themselves emotionally to the images of starvation, drought, floods and people suffocating under the load of wastes being piled on a bountiful nature, but a time bomb was ticking. And when the world population doubled and the world economy increased fivefold or tenfold, while leaving new hundreds of millions constantly hungry and in acute poverty, it would be too late.

Statement by President of Portugal

MARIO SOARES, President of Portugal, said it was not possible to ignore any more the increasing degradation of the planet's environment. At the same time, it had been recognized that there was a total interdependence between protection of the environment and the fight against poverty and underdevelopment. The Brundtland Report, Our Common Future, had built upon the Brandt Report, which had stressed, 15 years ago, as an imperative for the survival of the developed countries, the establishing of a North-South dialogue aimed at fighting underdevelopment.

Recognizing that situation, just at the rhetorical level, was not enough, he went on. The UNCED's greatest challenge was to decide on how to act, how to organize the required changes, and by which ways and means to implement them. There was great interest on the Conference, and the Global Forum was a living proof of such interest. It was also an act of political will which Governments could not ignore.

At a time when there was talk of the end of ideologies, due to the collapse of communism and the end of the division of the world into two rival blocs, he said, it was encouraging to see the idealism that UNCED had generated among youth, who believed in the generous cause of saving the planet. In a certain way, that was the rebirth of "utopia", meaning a belief in the capacity of mankind to take its fate in its own hands, by protecting the earth's resources, protecting biological diversity and addressing essential issues such as air and water pollution, as well as soil erosion. But mainly, it was a belief in the possibility of eliminating inequalities among individuals and nations and building a world of peace and justice.

The UNCED could not be seen as the end of ecological problems, but rather as a starting point in qualitative terms for tackling environmental issues and their economic, social and cultural implications. Portugal was a "border" country, in that it was a member of the European Community as well as one of the poorest among rich countries. For that reason, it was able to understand very well how environmental needs were interlinked with the question of transfer of technology, the burden of foreign debts and the requirements of sustainable development. It was urgent that rich and poor countries establish a dialogue to devise, in peace and solidarity, a way of saving the earth and its inhabitants. That was a common responsibility of all nations.

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United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

ENV/DEV/125
4 June 1992

TEN SPEAKERS ADDRESS ENVIRONMENT/DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE AS IT BEGINS ITS GENERAL DEBATE

(Received from a UN Information Officer.)

RIO DE JANEIRO, 3 June -- Beginning its general debate this afternoon, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) heard the Administrator of the United States Environmental Protection Agency declare his Government's "enthusiastic support" for the goals of the Conference, which began this morning in Rio de Janeiro.

The United States representative, William K. Reilly, said his country placed its highest priority on the management of international forests and also strongly supported the international climate change agreement.

Other speakers pointed to the need for adequate funding for the mechanisms expected to be established at the Conference, in particular, Agenda 21; the necessity of changing wasteful lifestyles and for addressing related economic and social problems; and demographic changes which would lead to further degradation of the environment.

Also speaking in the debate this afternoon were the Minister for Environment and Urban Affairs of Pakistan (on behalf of the "Group of 77" developing countries); the Minister for Environment and Natural Resources of Portugal (on behalf of the European Community); the Director-General in the Ministry of the Environment of Israel; and the Federal Minister for the Environment and Nuclear Safety of Germany.

Also speaking in this afternoon's debate were the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO); the Commissioner for North/South Relations of the Commission of the European Communities; the Minister of Lands of Chile; and the Mayor of Montreal (on behalf of the International Union of Local Authorities).

The observer for Palestine spoke in exercise of the right of reply.

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For information media—not an official record

Statements in General Debate

ANWAR SAIFULLAH KHAN, Minister for Environment and Urban Affairs of Pakistan, speaking on behalf of the "Group of 77" developing countries): The Conventions on Biological Diversity and Climate Change, despite the best efforts, had not met expectations and were already being criticized. Adequate attention had not been paid to the development concerns of the developing countries. Furthermore, insufficient recognition had been given to issues such as the debt burden, the reverse flow of resources and adverse terms of trade. Regrettably, there had been determined opposition by the developed world on the crucial issue of new, adequate and additional financial resources for the developing countries. The idea of a separate fund for the implementation of Agenda 21 was being vehemently opposed.

It was "paradoxical and astonishing" that debate continued on recommendations that had been made 20 years ago in Stockholm, such as raising the level of concessionary aid to poor countries to 0.7 per cent of gross national product (GNP). Either the evidence of environmental degradation was not being taken seriously or protection of the environment had not yet evoked the response it deserved. If the Earth Summit failed in its funding programmes, the whole process, especially Agenda 21, would remain more honoured in the breach than in the observance. Wasteful and over-consumptive lifestyles must change. It was unacceptable that 20 per cent of the world's population now consumed 80 per cent of its resources and produced 75 per cent of the emissions that polluted the atmosphere.

CARLOS BORREGO, Minister for Environment and Natural Resources of Portugal, speaking on behalf of the 12-member European Community: The Climate Change Convention was a significant first step in the process of elaborating a global response to a global problem. All countries should sign and ratify that instrument. The Community was ready to contribute to the early preparation of related protocol covering specific issues, particularly carbon dioxide emissions, and specific measures had already been adopted as part of the strategy to limit emission and improve energy efficiency.

The Community believed that the Biological Diversity Convention, while not meeting initial expectations, provided a package of measures which formed a basis for progress. It welcomed the draft Rio declaration, as it reaffirmed and built upon the Stockholm Declaration and which, together with Agenda 21, would serve as the basis for the establishment of a new and equitable global partnership.

The UNCED should agree upon a statement of principles on forests, which could provide a basis for a future global legally binding instrument. The Community would also consider in a positive spirit the negotiation of a framework convention on desertification. Any follow-up of UNCED would depend upon establishing a firm institutional basis in the United Nations system. A revitalized Economic and Social Council would be essential to improve the functioning of the United Nations system in the field of coordination of sustainable development. In addition, a high-level sustainable development commission would be an effective vehicle for strong follow-up for Agenda 21.

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The Global Environment Facility, appropriately adapted, should play a leading role as the multilateral funding mechanism to provide new and additional financial resources through a mix of grant and concessional funding of agreed incremental costs for achieving agreed global environmental benefits. The Community was committed to cooperate actively to improve the access of developing countries to environmentally sound technologies and know-how, on favourable terms, including on concessional and preferential terms, where mutually agreed, taking into account the need to protect intellectual property rights as well as the special needs of developing countries for the implementation of Agenda 21.

WILLIAM K. REILLY, Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency of the United States: The United States enthusiastically supported the goals of the Conference. Forests must be given the highest priority at the Conference and the initiative announced two days ago by the President of the United States had doubled the money that would be provided for conserving forests. An international agreement on the management of forests was a top priority of the United States at the Conference. It also strongly supported the climate change agreement and had developed an action plan for controlling greenhouse gases. Real progress, however, on that or any other issue, could not be made without public participation.

Those who continued to deny the interdependence of environment and development should examine what had happened in Eastern Europe, where for decades pollution control had been relaxed because it was thought such control would inhibit economic growth. The sad irony was that relaxed environmental protection had, in the end, left those economies devastated.

Only economic growth could pay for the clean technology necessary for environmental health. Pollution levels in the United States were sharply down from 20 years ago, even as the economy had grown substantially. People would look back on Rio as the time when the environment became an issue of State, a symbol of a time when economics seriously took account of the environment.

URI MARINOV, Director-General of the Ministry of Environment of Israel: In Israel the benefits of rains and the fruits of the earth had been enjoyed for thousands of years. In some cases, utilization of resources had been carefully planned but in others, Israel's resources had been overexploited. During the twentieth century, measures to restore the environment had begun. While the future presented a particular challenge to Israel's environment, protection of the environment was not contrary to development. Deeds, not words, were needed and Governments must act on that knowledge.

The most pressing environmental problem was proper environmental management. On the national level that means improved legislation and enforcement, information dissemination, education and incorporation of environmental policy into the decision-making process. Responsible regional cooperation was also essential for the implementation of environmental action. As part of the peace process that Israel was engaged in with its

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neighbours, there had been multilateral talks recently on environmental issues. The opportunity the environmental negotiations presented as a basis for overcoming political controversy should not be ignored.

Long ago, the Jewish nation had received Ten Commandments which governed relations among men. Israel now suggested a set of ten principles to regulate man's relationship with the environment. They were respect for environment; behavioural modification to preserve the earth; integrate environmental considerations into all decision-making; improve the environment; conserve resources that help the environment; turn to renewable sources of energy; not pollute, litter waste or destroy; study the environment and man's impact on the environment; and enlist in the service of the environment.

KLAUS TOEPFER, Federal Minister for the Environment and Nuclear Safety of Germany: The industralized countries had a specific responsibility in view of the pressures it placed on the environment and the technical and financial resources that it commanded. The Conference must overcome the cold war between North and South and between mankind and the natural environment, just as it had succeeded in overcoming the cold war between East and West.

The international community needed a dynamic set of confidence-building measures to overcome the contrasts between North and South. All countries should sign both Framework Conventions. Even before the conventions came into force, there should be a prompt start in implementing the commitments they contained. Germany would implement its carbon dioxide reduction programme to reach a 25 to 30 per cent reduction by the year 2005. It was further prepared to approve the Rio Declaration and to achieve an ambitious statement of principles for future negotiations on a global forest convention. It was also ready to increase funding and to provide new and additional financial resources. It urged the creation of trade conditions that would allow the developing countries equal opportunities to participate in world trade. The Conference must be the start of a dynamic process leading to a deepening of global and development partnership.

MOSTAFA K. TOLBA, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP): Sustainable development was not a slogan, but an exacting and demanding process, and meaningful reforms and bold policies were needed. Perceptual assumptions needed to be transformed, beginning with value for the environment. Policy procrastination -- a hypocritical game of playing hide and seek with scientific data -- must stop. A first step would be to sign, ratify and complement the two Conventions on Climate Change and Biodiversity.

If Agenda 21 was to have any chance of succeeding, then the process it represented -- the process of greening -- must be fully reflected in trade, banking and development assistance. The elimination of poverty and the sustainable development hopes of the third world were dependent on debt relief and a fair deal in world trade. The system whereby the farmers of the South -- the poorest of the poor -- suffered most when the richest of the rich heaped on agricultural subsidies must end.

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The fact that 1992 was a difficult year for many of the world's economies, and there were pressures on the resources of the South, were not reasons enough to reduce cooperation. Both North and South held the key to efforts that could benefit all. The current imbalance between the two must be addressed seriously. The South needed to recognize that it must develop. But it also needed to be assisted in order to avoid destructive development.

Dr. HIROSHI NAKAJIMA, Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO): The recent World Health Assembly had endorsed two resolutions on aspects of environmental health -- one relating to a new global strategy for environmental health, the other outlining intensified activities to deal with chemical hazards in the environment.

Good health and well-being could neither be attained nor maintained in hazardous and deteriorating environments. New ways of thinking and acting must be found in response to basic human needs for safe water, adequate sanitation, food and shelter. Action must be taken to ensure at least the minimum environmental conditions necessary for human well-being. "We cannot expect optimum nutritional behaviour in environments of hunger, or sound mental health in environments of disease and desperation, or good care of our common resources in environments of abject poverty."

Protecting and promoting health could no longer be considered the sole responsibility of the health sector. It was the responsibility of the whole of society. If that was understood, concrete meaning could be given to the first principle of the Rio Declaration, namely, that "Human beings are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development. They are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature".

ABEL MATUTES, Commissioner for North/South Relations at the Commission of the European Communities: Only equitable development could break the cycle of poverty and demographic pressure that inevitably led to the degradation of the environment. Preserving the environment was not only an obligation, but an economic requirement. The European Community was acting accordingly. An ambitious policy for the environment had been enacted. The internal programmes of the community would be supplemented by action outside, in order to help the developing countries in their objective of sustainable development.

In the area of forest protection, the Commission was pleased by the implementation of a broad programme on protecting the tropical forest that was being carried out by Brazil with the World Bank. It was a milestone, in which economic development and protection of the environment were dealt with simultaneously. The pilot project should be expanded to other Amazonian countries and to Asia. Eventually, the Community hoped for an international convention in that field.

The world was at a critical time. Civilization had long been seen as a constant attempt to conquer nature. In the year 2000, mankind would have to take another look, to change its outlook from one of mastery of the environment to one of respect and love for the world's "ecological capital".

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LUIS ALVARADO, Minister of Lands of Chile: The period since Stockholm should have prompted the international community to reach practical agreements. But there were many countries which still had not applied the principles of the Stockholm Declaration. Without universal participation, success was impossible.

Chile had regained democracy, but suffered from environmental degradation and an increasing gap in economic growth. As a result of inequality, the country had accumulated a huge foreign debt which adversely affected its development. Poorer sectors suffered most. Management of the environment was seen as a shared responsibility, and the Government was promoting a campaign in environmental education, and supported various regional plans of action. Chile intended to place emphasis on regional and subregional cooperation and environmental protection.

There was a need for a new moral ethic, in the light of global environmental problems. Those problems resulted from activities in the North, which owed an environmental debt to the world. The future would be preserved only if all nations worked together. A new stage in world cooperation for the environment should begin with the adoption of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, the signing of the Conventions on Climate Change and Biodiversity and immediate application of the programmes contained in Agenda 21.

JOHN DORE, Mayor of Montreal, speaking on behalf of the International Union of Local Authorities: The planet would be 50 per cent urbanized by the end of the century. It was clear that the cities did not have the capacity to absorb that growth and provide jobs and education. Urgent solutions must be found, lest the cities become jungles. Cities have often been thought of as centres of despair, but they should be seen as centres of hope. The cities must take a step in the direction of hope.

In Rio, two steps must be taken. First, information must be shared. Second, technical assistance must be provided at the international level. Today, that assistance was insufficient compared to what was needed. National and international agencies often preferred to deal with national Governments and cities which were often not equipped to deal on that level with their problems.

More funds should be made available to solve urban problems, to strengthen urban structures and to finance innovative development projects in the cities. There could be no sustainable development for the planet if there was no viable development in the cities.

Right of Reply

RIBTLI YOUSEF AWAD, Ambassador of Palestine in Nairobi, speaking in exercise of the right of reply: Israel had spoken of negotiations and had referred, in an indirect way, to the peace talks. He was pushing the Conference in a political direction, which would not be permitted.

As for eligibility to speak to the Conference, was an occupying force entitled to speak on an equal basis with everyone else? he asked. That occupying force had, in effect, mocked the international community. In Palestine, the Israeli occupation was the worst pollution of the environment. It included, among other things, its "iron fist" policy, confiscation of land and looting of water resources.

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United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

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ENV/DEV/126
4 June 1992

SECRETARY-GENERAL STRESSES CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE REPRESENTS 'MODEST FIRST STEP' FOR ACTION

Following is the text of the statement made today by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali at the ceremony marking the opening for signature of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Rio de Janeiro:

Climate change encompasses the globe and all of humanity. It raises issues that are both ecological and economic. The multitude and complexity of the interactions that make up this phenomenon illustrate, better than any other subject on its agenda, the challenge of UNCED [United Nations Conference on Environment and Development]. In determining the nature and the adequacy of responses to climate change, the interlocking interests at play symbolize the interrelationships of the global community, assembled in the United Nations Organization. It is therefore fitting that the signature of this Convention should be the first product of this Conference.

The document before you is a "pragmatic" convention, reflecting the political realities and the economic caution that prevail in the world today. It falls short of the initial hopes of many negotiators. There are widespread comments by scientists and environmentalists that the level of commitment in the Convention is not commensurate with the scale and the seriousness of the global problem that it addresses. Yet an "ideal" convention, whose strength of content would have been eviscerated by the absence of key actors, industralized and developing countries alike, would not have been much more than a slogan. It would have been ineffective.

This Convention -- and I note with satisfaction that it is a United Nations convention -- does contain important commitments to take action: action to mitigate and adapt to climate change and action to help other countries to do so. It is a modest first step. One may hope that its very modesty will motivate Governments and observers to maintain constructive pressure to strengthen the Convention over the coming years, as more scientific evidence comes in and as it is better appreciated that actions to protect the climate can generate economic benefits over time.

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The process of communication and review set up by the Convention offers ample opportunity for the Parties to assess evidence and to exercise peer pressure, even with the present framework of commitments. This process is, indeed, the key to the effectiveness of the Convention. It offers all the flexibility required to adapt action to evolving needs. The design of the process is, perhaps, the most important task ahead of the Integovernmental Negotiating Committee in preparing for the entry into force of the Convention.

Due process, under this compact as any other, will depend on the sincerity and the responsibility with which the Parties fulfil their respective obligations. The universality and democracy of the negotiation of this agreement holds out the hope that it will be genuinely respected by all Parties and that the resulting balance of interests and concerns will be maintained in all aspects of its implementation. We may hope that this Convention will be a building block of a world order in which all countries and all peoples will have equitable access to opportunities for sustainable development.

It is now for Governments to build upon the framework they have created. Mr. President, your gesture in being the first to affix a signature to this Convention is a significant one, that I hope will be widely and rapidly emulated. Such signatures will underline the political importance of this Convention and raise hopes of its early entry into force.

On their part, the United Nations Secretariat and the organizations of the United Nations system are, as always, ready to support and facilitate their forward steps.

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United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

ENV/DEV/127
4 June 1992

MAIN COMMITTEE OF ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE HOLDS ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

Decides to Establish Eight Contact Groups to Complete Negotiations on Unresolved Issues Facing Rio Conference

(Received from a UN Information Officer.)

RIO DE JANEIRO, 3 June -- At its first meeting this afternoon, the Main Committee of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) decided, without a vote, to establish eight open-ended contact groups, open to all Governments attending the Conference, to complete negotiations on the main outstanding issues before the Conference, including financial resources, technology transfer, atmosphere, forest principles and institutions for continuing UNCED's work.

The Committee also elected three Vice-Chairmen, from Czechoslovakia, Egypt and the Netherlands. The election of the fourth Vice-Chairman, as well as the designation of a Vice-Chairman who will serve as Rapporteur, was postponed. The Committee Chairman, Tommy Koh (Singapore), was elected this morning at the opening meeting of the Conference.

Reminding delegations that "Agenda 21", UNCED's plan of action, contains more than 80 bracketed paragraphs, Mr. KOH said the Committee had a very formidable task to accomplish in very little time and he intended to conduct its work with efficiency, good humour, respect and decorum. The Committee had to meet a "rigid, not flexible", deadline of Monday, 10 June. In order to meet that deadline, he proposed, and the Committee approved, the establishment of the contact groups and the holding of night meetings as well as of meetings on Saturday, 6 June.

The contact groups are as follows: finance, with Rubens Ricupero (Brazil) as Chairman; technology transfer, to be chaired by J.G.M. Alders (Netherlands); atmosphere, Chairman, Bo Kjellen (Sweden); biodiversity and biotechnology, Chairman, Vicente Sanchez (Chile); freshwater resources, Chairman, Bukar Shaib (Nigeria); legal instruments, Chairman, Nabil Elraby

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(Egypt); institutions, Chairman, Ismail Razali (Malaysia); and forest principles, whose Chairman is still to be decided.

The Committee will meet concurrently with two contact groups at a time and will conduct its work of "cleaning" Agenda 21 of brackets (which indicate areas still not agreed upon by the negotiators) on a paragraph-by-paragraph basis starting with the preamble. The committee will also take up the draft Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, as the Preparatory Committee for the Conference, at its last session, decided to transmit the set of 27 draft principles to the Rio Conference for further consideration and completion.

Also this afternoon, the Committee heard oral reports on the outcome of the negotiations on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity. They were presented by the Chairmen of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committees charged with their drafting, Jean Ripert (France) and Vicente Sanchez (Chile).

The Committee will meet again at 10 a.m. tomorrow, 4 June, to consider bracketed paragraphs in the first eight chapters of "Agenda 21".

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United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

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4 June 1992

ELEVEN SPEAKERS ADDRESS ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT ISSUES AS RIO DE JANEIRO 'EARTH SUMMIT' BEGINS SECOND DAY

(Received from a UN Information Officer.)

RIO DE JANEIRO, 4 June -- The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) continued its general debate this morning in Rio de Janeiro.

Speakers in the debate addressed a broad range of issues, among them population policy, the potential of nuclear power for meeting future energy needs, industrial development as both problem and solution, and the need to integrate environmental considerations into the economic and lending policies of world financial institutions.

Statements were made by: the Observer for the Holy See, the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism of Antigua and Barbuda, the President of the World Bank, the Minister for the Environment of Italy, the Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the Minister for the Environment of France, and the Executive Director of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme.

Also making statements were the Deputy Secretary-General of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Director-General of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), a representative of the Baha'i International Community and the Minister of Land Planning, Tourism and Environment of Burundi.

The representative of Qatar spoke in exercise of his right of reply.

Statements in General Debate

Archbishop RENATO R. MARTINO, Observer for the Holy See: The Catholic Church approached both the care and protection of the environment and all questions regarding development from the point of view of the human person. Therefore, all ecological programmes and development initiatives must respect the full dignity and freedom of whoever might be affected by such programmes,

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their ultimate purpose being to enhance the quality of human life, to place creation in the fullest way possible at the service of the human family.

The scandalous patterns of consumption and waste of all kinds of resources by a few must be corrected in order to ensure justice and sustainable development to all. For developing nations, the acquisition and use of new technologies was a clear necessity. Only an equitable global sharing of technology would make possible the process of sustainable development.

When considering the problems of environment and development, due attention must also be paid to the complex issue of population. The position of the Holy See regarding procreation is frequently misunderstood. The Church does not propose procreation at any cost. Its constant position is that human life is sacred; that the aim of public policy is to enhance the welfare of families; that it is the right of spouses to decide on family size and spacing of births, without pressures from Governments or organizations. What the Church opposed is the imposition of demographic policies and the promotion of methods of limiting births which are contrary to the objective moral order and to the liberty, dignity and conscience of the human being.

RODNEY WILLIAMS, Minister of Economic Development, Tourism and Industry of Antigua and Barbuda: Current systems of production and distribution must be completely altered; nothing less would do. What provokes a small island State to make such a proposal to large, wealthy States? The answer is survival. A healthy environment is Antigua and Barbuda's primary resource and the key to its livelihood -- clean air, predictable climate, pristine beaches are the necessities of its development plans. Global warming could result in a sea-level rise that would threaten the very fabric of society.

At the same time, Antigua and Barbuda's contribution to the degradation of the environment is marginal. Scientific evidence showed that developed countries produced nine times more carbon dioxide per capita than developing countries. Thus, the developed countries must recognize the financial and technological inadequacies of developing countries. Small island countries could not resolve critical environmental problems on their own.

Antigua and Barbuda would sign the Conventions on Climate Change and Biodiversity and strongly supported Agenda 21 and the Rio Declaration. But if the developed countries -- the major contributors to the poor condition of the environment -- were not willing to abide by those conventions, the activities of the Earth Summit would be futile.

LEWIS T. PRESTON, President of the World Bank: The Bank's effectiveness in combating poverty, its fundamental objective, while protecting the environment, is the benchmark against which its performance as a development institution should be judged. The Bank was reinforcing its poverty reduction programmes and ensuring that environmental considerations were fully integrated into its economic thinking and lending activities. In an effort to

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improve the Bank's policies and their implementation, the Bank was lending for environmental purposes. Bank-supported projects now included environmental assessments.

The Bank also supported its developing country members in designing comprehensive environmental action plans to carry out the objectives of Agenda 21 and was helping to mobilize the resources needed to implement those programmes. The Bank proposed an "earth increment" for the forthcoming 1993-95 replenishment period of its International Development Association -- its concessional arm which lends to the poorest countries. If donors were prepared to support such an initiative, the Bank was ready to propose to its Board an annual allocation from its net income as its own contribution to the "earth increment", to help address national environmental issues. The cost of addressing global issues would be additional and that responsibility rested with the industrial countries.

He urged donors to support the replenishment of the Global Environmental Facility (GEF). The time had come to stop arguing about who was to blame for environmental degradation; the world needed a common effort to ensure its common future.

GIORGIO RUFFOLO, Minister for the Environment of Italy: Italy approves the Rio Declaration and, once finalized, will endorse Agenda 21. A few high priority programmes should be selected and financing for them arranged. For the rest of Agenda 21, an operational calendar should be established, after evaluation of cost estimates.

Without precise targets and timetables, the efficacy of the Climate Convention was seriously impaired. A "prompt start" of its clauses was necessary before the minimum of ratifications was reached for its entry into force, as well as an "immediate start" of negotiations for the protocols. Italy would support a statement reaffirming the European Community's intention to stabilize carbon dioxide emissions at the 1990 level by the year 2000.

Italy was concerned about the financial and technological problem, as each country was presenting its own "mix" of channels, mechanisms and instruments. The financial and technological problem was interrelated with all the others. Countries could not be asked to contribute to sustainable development in a a spirit of global partnership if definitive engagements were not taken on the financial and technological side. How could they be asked to save forests, to stop desertification and start responsible population policies if others did not share the burden of the effort needed to eradicate poverty and to promote development. Italy favoured the Global Environmental Facility but believed it must be adequately replenished and that it must undergo a revision of its decision-making process.

Additional funding for developing countries could hardly come from traditional budgetary sources. The only way to overcome that impasse was to introduce fiscal instruments -- "ecotaxes" -- to protect the environment and to finance assistance to developing countries.

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HANS BLIX, Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA): In the minds of many people, the very words "nuclear energy" connoted devastation and contamination from nuclear weapons, or an accident, or from careless handling of radioactive waste. Such critical scrutiny could be valuable. However, nuclear energy also had various applications with tremendous potential for sustainable development. The IAEA was deeply engaged in the transfer to developing countries of radioisotope and nuclear techniques to assist in resolving such problems as marine pollution, desertification, soil erosion, water resources and sewage treatment.

Efforts were being made within IAEA to draft a nuclear safety convention and much work is going into the construction of new generations of nuclear power plants that would be simpler to operate and that would have a greater degree of safety. Efforts were also being made to strengthen the safety of some 430 nuclear power plants now in operation. In addition, proposals had been made in Agenda 21 on the safe and environmentally sound management of radioactive waste.

Demand for energy, in particular electricity, would increase considerably in the coming decades. Faced with that growth, the world would have to carefully assess what mix of energy sources were compatible with sustainable development. Today, fossil fuels made up about 90 per cent of the world's commercial energy. That heavy use was at the root of some of the most serious environmental problems. It seemed certain that nuclear power, as a non-carbon-producing source of energy, could play an important role in addressing climate change, urban pollution, acid in the atmosphere and other environmental problems.

SEGOLENE ROYAL, Minister for the Environment of France: There was too much development in some countries, too much poverty in others and, in general, too much scorn for human life throughout the world. An unjust world was one that destroyed itself. Yet, although many people were destroying, people were also capable of rebuilding and protecting. So, by gathering here, a great deal had already been done. Destruction was not inevitable.

The efforts must include justice in the distribution of resources, the sharing of effort, and in the shouldering of responsibility. France would sign the biodiversity treaty and was particularly interested in that problem, having worked in the past on the protection of the Antarctic and a sanctuary for whales in the south. The declaration on forests was a good start, but it should go much further and result in an international treaty. The essential spirit for Agenda 21 was the basic right of everyone to have access to air, water and nature.

The developed countries had the prime responsibility in destruction of the environment. Thus, France was committed to increasing its development assistance of 0.7 per cent of gross national product (GNP) by the year 2000, which would offer an effective response to Agenda 21. In addition, the following principals must be adhered to: precaution, the concept that polluters should be payers and transparency. An economic world order that favoured over-consumption by the rich must be questioned. The world needed a

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new alliance, a new development model that would orient itself around world-wide solidarity.

GEORGIO GIACOMELLI, Executive Director of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme: Drugs were becoming one of the most insidious forms of pollution that threatened the world, although drugs were rarely discussed in ecological terms. The link was not evident but it was real and vital.

Drugs and pollution, the down-side of the industrial society, reflected the destruction of an age-old equilibrium, without substituting a new equilibrium. They threatened the ecosystems of some of the most fragile regions of the planet, the Amazon region in particular. A major cause of deforestation and water pollution was the illicit culture and production of drugs. The growers, often migrants from impoverished urban centres, had no respect for the earth. Land was completely exhausted, then abandoned. There was rapid erosion and chemicals used in cultivation had disastrous effects on soil and water.

A planet-wide awareness was beginning to develop, but it must go beyond awareness and lead to a solution. Ecological imperatives were at the forefront of the agency's fight against drugs, but much of the damage caused by drug cultivation and production extended beyond its area of involvement, international agencies must act in concert with Governments to halt drug cultivation. The period of ecological romanticism had vanished. A profound cultural change was required. The consumer-oriented society posed great threats to the environment and to the development of the countries in the South.

PIERRE VINDE, Deputy Secretary-General of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD): Preserving the environment was not incompatible with long-term growth. Enterprises in most manufacturing sectors had been able to reduce their pollutant emissions significantly while remaining competitive, and economic criteria were seen to be increasingly important in consumers' choice of products.

The poorest populations could not choose environmental protection over their own survival. Available clean technologies must be made accessible to countries which had neither the means nor the time to develop them.

The OECD countries must show determination to take the necessary steps towards environmentally sound economic development. Policy interventions which had negative effects on trade had to be abandoned and environmental costs and benefits internalized in national and international prices. The OECD countries must manifest a special commitment to sustainable global development and must set a clear example of what was to be done. Sooner or later taxpayers in the OECD countries would have to accept responsibility for safeguarding the future of the planet. The agreement on climate change was a step forward but the absence of temporal targets showed that there was a long

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way to go. It was hoped that the example of several of the most industrialized OECD countries in setting ambitious targets for changing production methods and consumer habits would be widely followed.

DOMINGO L. SIAZON, Director-General of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO): Industry was part of the problem and the solution, both an instrument of progress and a major source of environmental degradation. The challenge was to encourage the right kind of industrialization. The UNIDO was actively promoting the concept of ecologically sustainable industrial development. The conclusion reached at the UNIDO Conference on Ecologically Sustainable Industrial Development bore a close resemblance to the proposals drawn up in preparation for UNCED.

The UNIDO had focused on specific aspects of industrial development that offered the greatest environmental benefits, ranging from the adoption of clean technologies to the introduction of energy-saving measures in industrial processes. The UNIDO had found that lack of knowledge was often the sole barrier to implementing ecologically sustainable industrial practices. To address that information gap, it had designed a cleaner production demonstration programme and maintained extensive computer information systems, networks and related services under its Industrial and Technological Information Bank.

The vision was simple -- equitable industrial development for all without exceeding the ecological capacity of the planet. However, financial resources and proper mechanisms must be the follow-up to the Conference or there would be little to show for its efforts.

HAN JU KIM-FARLEY, of the Baha'i International Community: The fundamental question facing UNCED was whether humanity, with its entrenched patterns of conflict, self-interest and short-sighted behaviour, could commit itself to enlightened cooperation and long-range planning on a global scale. The UNCED process had highlighted both the complexity and interdependence of the problems facing humanity, none of which could be realistically addressed without considering all the others, or without a magnitude of cooperation and coordination at all levels. The potential for such cooperation was, however, undermined by the general debasement of human character.

There were certain trends in the world which destroyed confidence and trust -- the foundations of collaboration. The reversal of those destructive trends was essential to the establishment of unity and cooperation, and would require a deeper understanding of human nature. A true resolution of the dangerous state of affairs could only be realized when the spiritual dimension of human nature was taken into account and the human heart transformed. The changes, unity and cooperation required to reorient the world towards an environmentally sustainable and just future could only be possible by touching the human spirit, by appealing to those universal values which alone empowered peoples to act in accordance with the long-term interests of the planet and humanity as a whole.

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LOUIS NDUWIMANA, Minister of Land Planning, Tourism and Environment of Burundi: Burundi's primary concern was to protect the earth, essential for agricultural production. For a population more than 90 per cent agricultural, facing demographic pressures on scarce land and practising methods inappropriate for an already fragile soil, water erosion had reached alarming proportions; the land was no longer fertile.

A revolution in agricultural practices was the only solution and should be begun without delay. Soil management must become an essential component of development projects. The Government had initiated a national programme to manage the country's natural resources. None of those efforts would be possible without a consistent demographic policy. A policy of family planning, making the family responsible for its destiny, was now in force.

On the international level, Burundi participated in all forums. All its endeavours, however, had not been sufficient to put an end to the problems Burundi faced in the environment sphere. Demographic pressures and rudimentary agricultural techniques led Burundi to overexploitation of its natural resources, including deforestation, and to the degradation of the soil and the extinction of its biodiversity. Water resources were also threatened with pollution and overexploitation.

Those problems were aggravated by the global economic situation. The debt remained a cause of the degradation of the environment, not to mention the deteriorating price of commodities, particularly coffee and tea. The main cause of poor management of natural resources was poverty. To meet their basic needs, the poor made irrational use of the resources immediately available. To save the environment, it was necessary to fight poverty. That fight would not succeed without international solidarity. Burundi appealed to the wealthy nations; if they aided the poorer countries, victory was certain.

Right of Reply

KHALED EL BAKER (Qatar): Using coal increased carbon emissions and smoke might lead to even more climate change. Imposing a tax on oil would not solve the carbon emission problem. Qatar was more concerned than others about climate change because it had a fragile environment. It supported every recommendation aimed at saving the environment, raising efficiency in production and consumption of power, the use of renewable forms of energy and the ending of present patterns of consumption. Special attention should be given to developing countries whose survival depended on the production of fossil fuels.

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United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

ENV/DEV/129
4 June 1992

CONFERENCE'S MAIN COMMITTEE AGREES ON FORMULATION INVOLVING PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

(Received from a UN Information Officer.)

RIO DE JANEIRO, 4 June -- The Main Committee of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) this morning began its substantive work aimed at reaching agreement on the main unresolved issues in "Agenda 21". Those include financial resources, technology transfer, protection of the atmosphere and the forests and institutional arrangements for continuing the work initiated by the Conference.

Agenda 21 is a highly detailed blueprint for action to be taken by Governments, development agencies, United Nations organizations and independent sectors in all major areas affecting the relationship between the environment and the economy.

This morning, the Main Committee agreed on a formulation stating that in the context of external indebtedness, the provision of additional financial resources to developing countries, as well as their efficient utilization, was essential.

The breakthrough language, involving the insertion of the phase "their efficient utilization" in a bracketed sentence stating that additional financial resources in favour of developing countries are essential, was proposed by the representative of Chile. The sentence is contained in a paragraph addressing the question of external indebtedness in chapter two of Agenda 21, which deals with international cooperation to accelerate sustainable development in developing countries.

Also this morning, the Committee considered the preamble of Agenda 21, and was able to remove brackets surrounding the expression "political commitment at the highest level". It also agreed to a new first paragraph for the introduction to chapter two, which is based on language contained in the final document adopted earlier this year by the eighth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD VIII).

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For information media—not an official record

The new text would have States, in order to meet the challenges of environment and development, decide to establish a new global partnership, which would commit them to engage in a constructive dialogue inspired by the need to achieve a more efficient and equitable world economy, keeping in view the increasing interdependence of the community of nations. States would also agree that sustainable development should become a priority item on the agenda of the international community.

In another development, following a proposal by the Chairman, Tommy Koh (Singapore), the Committee decided as its method of work that deliberations would focus on bracketed texts only; new proposals should not be introduced.

The Committee completed its slate of officers by electing Chile to the post of the fourth Vice-Chairman. The others, Czechoslovakia, Egypt and the Netherlands, were elected yesterday. Still to be decided is the designation of the Vice-Chairman who will also act as Rapporteur. Also, the Committee approved the Chairman's nomination of Charles Liburd (Guyana) to chair the contact group on forest principles. Yesterday, the Committee established eight contact groups to negotiate the most contentious issues before UNCED. (For details, see Press Release ENV/DEV/125, issued today.)

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United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

ENV/DEV/130
5 June 1992

CLIMATE CONVENTION OPENS FOR SIGNATURE TODAY AT UN CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

(Received from a UN Information Officer.)

RIO DE JANEIRO, 4 June -- Following a series of negotiations that spanned 15 months, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change was opened for signature today at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). Fernando Collor de Mello, President of Brazil, presided over the ceremony, which was also addressed by Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Secretary-General of the United Nations, and Jean Ripert (France), Chairman of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations body created to produce the Convention.

President Collor was the first to sign the Convention. Over the next 10 days, Heads of State or Government, ministers and high-ranking diplomats are expected to put their names to the document, expressing their countries' support for the global effort to control the human causes of climate change.

In order for the Convention to enter into force, however, it must first be ratified, accepted, approved or acceeded to by national legislatures in at least 50 countries, a process that may take two years.

The overall objective of the agreement is to stabilize atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases at a level that would prevent dangerous interference by human activity with the climate system.

For developed countries, this means taking steps to limit emissions of greenhouse gases, including carbon dioxide, and to enhance their retention by sinks and reservoirs, recognizing that returning to earlier levels of emissions by the end of this decade would contribute to the achievement of the Convention's objective. With the aim of returning their emissions to 1990 levels, developed countries further commit themselves to providing specific and detailed information on their progress towards that goal. The Convention calls for at least two reviews of progress before the end of the decade and envisages the possibility of amending this commitment on the basis of the reviews and of scientific and other information available.

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Under the Convention, all Parties are required to provide periodic updates on their national inventories of greenhouse gases, including emissions by resources and removals by sinks. They might also provide general information on their efforts to mitigate climate change and further the process of adaptation to it in fulfilment of their commitments. Developing countries have more time to comply with those requirements.

To enable developing countries to meet their obligations under the Convention, developed countries have committed themselves to provide "new and additional" financial assistance. The Convention establishes criteria for the selection and guidance of a mechanism through which finance and technology will flow to developing countries, and identifies the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) as the mechanism to be used for that purpose on an interim basis.

Implementation of the Convention will be overseen by the Conference of the Parties, a body of representatives of all countries that ratify the Convention. The first session of the Conference of the Parties is to be convened no later than one year after entry into force of the Convention.

In the meantime, the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations body created to produce the Convention, will continue to meet in preparation for the first session of the Conference of the Parties. A resolution on interim arrangements, adopted with the Convention, provides for the next meeting of the Negotiating Committee, to be held later this year, as well as for the continuation of the secretariat.

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United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

ENV/DEV/131
5 June 1992

SUMMIT CONFERENCE IN RIO HEARS 19 FURTHER SPEAKERS IN GENERAL DEBATE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT QUESTIONS

(Received from a UN Information Officer.)

RIO DE JANEIRO, 4 June -- The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) meeting in Rio de Janeiro, heard 19 speakers this afternoon as it continued its general debate.

Many speakers emphasized that different regions had different environmental problems, and solutions had to be individually tailored. In the North, the talk was about the quality of life, while in the South, life itself was at stake. For the poor, the discussion of global issues in various multilateral conventions was unconnected to any reality of which they were aware. For those people, improving the environment meant safe surroundings and housing.

Also this afternoon, the Conference elected the following nine Vice-Presidents from Asian States: China, India, Indonesia, Iran, Republic of Korea, Maldives, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia and Vanuatu.

Statements were made by the Minister for Environment of Norway, the Minister for External Relations of Brazil, the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, the Minister for the Environment of Romania, the President of the Inter-American Development Bank, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Marshall Islands, the Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization, the Deputy Director-General of the International Labour Organisation, the Assistant Minister of Local Government, Land and Housing of Botswana, and the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements.

Also speaking in the debate were the Secretary-General of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee, the observer from the Netherlands Antilles, the Executive Director of the International Energy Agency, the Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organization, the Minister of Regional Municipalities and Environment of Oman, the Minister for the Environment and Natural Resources Development of Kiribati, the Minister of Ecology and

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Biological Resources of Kazakhstan, the Minister of Environment and Tourism of Burkina Faso and the Minister of State and Chairman of the Environmental Protection Council of Yemen.

Statements in Debate

THORBJORN BERNTSEN, Minister for the Environment of Norway: Attacking poverty through policy change must be a main element of the follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). International transfer of financial resources to developing countries was essential. Norway would continue to maintain a high level of development assistance and was prepared to contribute new and additional finances for measures to combat global environmental problems. The Nordic countries had presented a package of financial resources for environment and development. Technology transfer to developing countries must take place on preferential terms. The connections between trade and environment must be addressed, but environmental concerns must not be used as a pretext to introduce discriminatory trade practices.

Norway had paid particular attention to the degradation of the marine environment. Land-based pollution ought to be curbed and pollution control standards brought up to meet the demands set for the North Sea region. The disposal of radioactive wastes must be improved. International cooperation to reach cost-effective replacement of the most dangerous existing nuclear plants with safer and more environmentally sound alternatives must be accelerated. Russia, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and Norway have launched a joint programme to document the scope of the problem in the shallow seas next to the Arctic Ocean. Those who claimed that storage of radioactive wastes was harmless should prove their case. The burden of proof should not rest with those who might be harmed.

CELSO LAFER, Minister for External Relations of Brazil: The Rio Conference was a privileged opportunity to introduce changes in prevailing international relationships, to replace the logic of confrontation with the logic of cooperation and shared responsibility. The Conference was unambiguously oriented towards the democratization of the international system. The cooperation required for dealing with the challenges of the protection of nature and the promotion of sustainable development demanded mutual trust and democratic participation by all States.

The Rio Declaration would be a landmark in the evolution of the international legal system. However, innovative forms of cooperation in the economic and financial fields were indispensable for ensuring the full implementation of the commitments entered into at this Conference. That was particularly true in the area of science and technology. Science and technology had the potential to foster sustainable development or to sustain the paradox of the simultaneous existence of excessive power and excessive impotence. The problems of poverty and starvation in the developing world were eloquent testimony to such impotence. That situation could only be reversed if developing countries were allowed access to, and transfer of, technology.

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WILLIAM H. DRAPER III, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP): A new concept of security must be created -- security of health, education, opportunity and the physical environment. No global plan to protect the common habitat would be realistic until the needs and concerns of people in developing countries were taken into consideration. Such a plan would succeed only if North and South could work together and only if environment was perceived as a unifying link, not a divisive issue.

That would be possible if understanding could be reached on four basic points. First, that the environment was not an isolated problem and could not be addressed as such. Explosive population growth, poverty and environmental degradation were part of the same vicious circl; second, that environmental priorities changed at different stages of development. Any solution to environmental problems must take into account differing national perceptions and priorities.

The third point was that the concept of sustainability raised profound questions about the character and distribution of future global growth. Present consumption patterns in the North, if taken on a global scale, would spell ecological disaster. And, fourth, the unifying link between North and South would be the recognition that the richer nations must assume some of the additional costs of the transition to sustainable development in the South.

Subsidies that promoted the destruction of natural resources must be ended. Countries needed to promote and adapt technologies that minimized the use of non-renewable energy. Developing countries had to be given the capacity to manage their own environment.

MARCIAN BLEAHU, Minister for the Environment of Romania: Awakened from a half-century-long nightmare of poisoned ideology, Romania today was faced with severe economic, social and ecological problems, caused principally by the banning of private property, the irrational use of the country's resources and the creation of enormous production units in industry and agriculture without the least concern for their impact on the environment. Man and the environment were the greatest victims of communism. Romania therefore had an unequalled reputation for pollution, and its ecological situation was scandalous and intolerable. Its dead rivers, degraded soil and devastated forests were Romania's dowry, the one happy exception being the Danube Delta and a few virgin belts.

For Romania, it was not a question of choosing between environment and development. Closing polluting factories would result in serious social problems; halting the cutting of forests would halt the production of important products essential for the country's economy. Thus, any action to improve quality of life must provide not only for the economic aspect but also for limiting ecological damage at all levels.

The objectives which flowed from "Agenda 21" were the pressing problems of financial resources; the transfer of technology, particularly for countries with economies in transition; the protection of oceans and seas; toxic and dangerous wastes; and legislation to confront the most urgent problems.

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ENRIQUE IGLESIAS, President of the Inter-American Development Bank: Patterns of consumption were continuing to divide North and South. In the North, the talk was about the quality of life, while in the South life itself was at stake. Growth was not an option, it was essential. The Conference was opening at a time when there was a realization that the problems of different regions were not the same and solutions had to be individually tailored.

It was important to see the Conference in the context of the new world order, which implied peace among nations and people, and peace between humanity and nature. There must be global action. The instruments before the Conference did not have to be perfect. The point was that greater resources were needed and there must be foresight in dealing with nature. The developed countries had the greatest resources to deal with the debt to the environment and had special responsibility since they were the greatest contributors to that debt.

It was clear that many environmental problems lent themselves to regional solutions. The countries of Latin America were aware of environmental issues and the tremendous problems of population growth. Among others, they must address the problems of the city while protecting biodiversity. The whole of society was involved.

TOM KIJINER, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Marshall Islands: The Marshall Islands, composed of 29 atolls and five islands scattered over 750,000 square miles in the Central Pacific, had a ratio of land to water of less than 1 to 10,000 with an average elevation of about 7 feet above sea level. While its preoccupation with overcoming obstacles to development had limited its involvement in international forums, the Earth Summit was of particular significance. It was time to incorporate "green accounting" and environmental taxes into national economies. Achieving a balance between environment and development would involve restructuring economic accounting systems and reordering consumption patterns. It would require people to learn how to live with less and enjoy life more.

Transcending national boundaries, issues such as the rise of the sea level, ozone depletion, poverty and desertification called for immediate international action. A recent study conducted in the Marshall Islands indicated that if recent projections for sea-level rise were correct, the traditional way of life and future economic development in the Marshall Islands would be severely compromised, if not destroyed. The sea-level rise could annihilate the Marshall Islands as effectively as a nuclear bomb. It was imperative that the Climate Change Convention set forth limits on "greenhouse" gas emission on a world-wide basis, and that it be legally binding. The Marshall Islands called on the large industrialized countries to support the meaningful conclusion of the Convention.

WILLIAM A. O'NEIL, Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization (IMO): Sustained development of the world was not possible without shipping; if it was not properly regulated and managed, it could present immense dangers to the environment. The IMO had developed a comprehensive body of international legislation that had been implemented over

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a period of 30 years. Standards were high because it was well understood that any attempt to lower them on any grounds -- such as economy or increased profit -- would inevitably lead to more accidents and pollution. The Conference must arrive at some balance between the continuing growth of the maritime economies of the developing nations and protection of the environment.

Since the beginning of the last decade, the amount of oil pollution from shipping operations had been reduced by as much as 60 per cent. But in practice, some ships were substandard, crews were poorly trained and the world fleet, especially of tankers, was ageing quickly. There was, in short, a danger that the gains made in the last 20 years could ultimately be lost.

In following up the efforts at UNCED, it would be disastrous if the programmes that already existed were ignored in the rush to find new solutions. For example, IMO's World Maritime University, which opened in 1983, was one of the most successful projects in the educational field ever undertaken by a United Nations agency. Yet, its long-term future was far from secure. It must receive financial support if it was to continue to perform tasks in the interests of the international shipping community.

MARY CHINERY-HESSE, Deputy Director-General of the International Labour Organisation (ILO): The traditional distinction between the working environment and the general environment had become blurred. Indeed, the two were inextricably linked. The first line of defence for the protection of nature often lay in the protection of workers and their environment. Much of the environmental degradation of the atmosphere, water and land could be traced to places of work.

Every year, there are over 110 million accidents in the workplace. Every day, there were approximately 500 fatal occupational accidents. The economic cost of those accidents consumed 2 to 3 per cent of the global gross national product (GNP). Obviously, action to prevent those accidents would provide a direct contribution to sustainable development. And, while discussion at this Conference continued on new environmental conventions, it should not be forgotten that ILO has an international labour code of over 170 Conventions concerning the working environment, including a chemical Convention.

The work of ILO on structural adjustment and employment was relevant in helping both developed and developing countries to minimize the pain and maximize the gain in moving towards paths of sustainable development. The choice to be made was not between environmental protection or development, nor was it between the environment and jobs. New approaches to development must be defined to achieve both environment and development objectives.

BOOMETSWE MOKGOTHU, Assistant Minister of Local Government, Land and Housing of Botswana: There must be a change in the relationship between man and the environment to save humanity from disaster. There must be greater international cooperation and realization of the links between development and conservation. The first step was to change the global system of trade and debt, the most obvious symptom of the dysfunctional economic system being the crushing burden of Africa's debt crisis. This indebtedness, when coupled with

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insistence on drastic structural adjustment programmes, was driving developing countries, particularly in Africa, further into poverty and environmental degradation.

Botswana proposes the convening of a conference to prepare a convention on desertification. The technological development of the North must be made available to developing countries. Ownership of patents constrained both technology transfer and cooperation. To argue that technologies were freely available on the commercial market ignored the realities of the developing world's burdens and needs. This was not a plea for charity, but a call for investment to the benefit of all. There was dire need for a re-direction of available resources and a better us of bilateral debt, not only to regenerate economic growth but to eradicate poverty, reduce high population growth rates and rehabilitate and conserve natural resources. The industrialized countries needed to commit resources and will power; the developing world needed to look at the future with new eyes.

ARCOT RAMACHANDRAN, Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat): The "Earth Summit" was not just a Conference, it was history moving in the right direction. Little would have been achieved in the eyes of a vast segment of humanity unless it paved the way for real improvement in their immediate, day-to-day living environment. Millions of poor were huddled in vast urban slums and rural shacks, lacking not just secure work, but even basic necessities, such as clean water and waste disposal. Many at the Conference would talk of the slow and agonizing death of the planet, if urgent action was not taken. But for the world's poor, that agony had already begun. For the poor, talk of the global issues embodied in various multilateral conventions was unconnected to any reality of which they were aware. For them, improving the environment meant safe surroundings and sound housing.

When it comes to the environment and sustainable development, a human settlements approach and a focus on cities and towns was indispensable to success. Regardless of the environmental issue, the role of human settlements of all sizes would be decisive. Cities and towns would not disappear. Given the dominant place of human settlements, the challenge of sustainable development was largely an urban challenge. Thus, an agenda of sustainable development must contain an urban agenda. "Agenda 21" contains a rather well-conceived human settlements programme. The question was whether the international community was prepared to turn resolution into action, and moral support into financial commitment.

FRANK X. NJENGA, Secretary-General of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee: Principles that should be incorporated in the Earth Charter include the protection of the global environment as a common concern of mankind, which should be pursued in a new global partnership. In protecting the environment, emphasis must be accorded to promoting the economic growth and development of developing countries. The international community should ensure that no significant harm was caused to the environment. The responsibility of Member States should be common but differentiated, and enforcement of environmental standards by the developing countries should be in accordance with their individual capacities. The developed countries should make environmentally sound technology available on a preferential and non-commercial basis. The protection of the marine environment must be a main item to be addressed by the Conference.

The Framework Convention on Climate Change could not be regarded as anything more than a code of conduct. If it was to be effective, it must receive widespread adherence, especially by the industrialized countries which were "responsible for the present mess". The Convention on Biological Diversity was intended to evolve a broad legal framework, pooling together a wide range of actions at national and international levels for conservation and sound use of biodiversity.

C.H. STATIA, observer from the Netherlands Antilles: Small island countries, with their fragile ecology, limited resources, geographic dispersion and isolation from large markets, were vulnerable to changes in the environment. For example, a rise in the sea-level would affect the low coastline of the Netherlands Antilles and substantially affect life on the islands.

Global environmental problems required the commitment and involvement of all countries. However, in many ways it had proven easier to voice the need for cooperation than actually to achieve it. On a global regional scale, the environment knew no boundaries; protecting it meant cooperation in all aspects.

For the Netherlands Antilles, that meant cooperation with Spanish, French and English-speaking neighbours. Even within its own islands, the people of the Netherlands Antilles had to communicate in four languages. Small, yes, but its varied ethnic and multilingual society could play a meaningful role in demonstrating how to link diverse views in productive ways.

HELGA STEEG, Executive Director of the International Energy Agency (IEA): The IEA incorporates the environmental dimension into all its work. It recognizes that energy is the largest single source of the "greenhouse" gases implicated in global climate change. Member Governments were prepared to counter the risks entailed in climate change by finding the most effective energy policies to respond to the problem. To achieve environmental goals, the strengths of energy markets must be harnessed, not stifled; countries should be free to develop their own national strategies which build on their particular energy and industrial situations; and the partnerships of all countries were needed to find climate change policies which were cost-effective.

Continuing its work to remove or reduce undesirable energy subsidies, trade barriers and market distortions was one of IEA's highest priorities. Removing fossil-fuel subsidies world-wide increases, rather than stifles, economic growth while contributing to environmental goals.

Energy sources must be used cleanly, economically and efficiently world-wide. Energy efficiency and renewable energy, while playing increasingly important roles, would not be sufficient. More forms of energy would be needed for the foreseeable future. Diversity of supply sources was required to match the broad diversity of countries and resource endowments.

ENRIQUEZ SAVIGNAC, Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organization (WTO): Measured by any yardstick, tourism was arguably the world's biggest industry. The WTO had long believed that tourism and the environment could peacefully coexist and had expressed it in three proposition: travel promotes environmental awareness; well-organized tourism was a good friend of the environment; and a successful tourism industry needed a high quality environment.

Travel fosters an awareness of the small size of the planet, heightens consciousness of its finite resources and creates a feeling of solidarity with the peoples of the world. At the same time, it must be organized so that it respected, rather than overwhelmed, the environment. Whatever risks tourism might pose for the environment, it was not the areas visited by tourists that were at greatest risk. Rather, it was the areas where tourists could not travel because of war, disease, drought or natural disasters.

Tourism was a source of wealth for those countries that could chose to develop it. Fortunately for the environment, it waa also a smokeless industry. Agricultural and local handicraft production, as well as cultural traditions, such as music, dance and other folklore events, could also be stimulated by tourism. In the long term, the protection of the environment in tourist destination areas would not take place against the tide of the market, but rather in the same direction as that tide.

AMOUR BIN SHUWAIN AL-HOSNI, Minister of Regional Municipalities and Environment of Oman: Oman had adopted a rational, preventative approach to the preservation of the environment in order to ensure that economic projects did not affect the environment. In Oman, institutions had been established, together with programmes and laws to preserve the environment and fight pollution. All projects launched in the country today were required to have a "No Environmental Objection Certificate". The national strategy for the protection of the environment pursued an approach based on local conditions.

The Sultanate would hold an international symposium at the end of the year to discuss the draft prepared by a national committee on a strategy for the protection of Oman's environment. The symposium would be attended by representatives of all the international organizations in the field. Oman supported any action that sought to preserve the environment within the limit of its resources.

It was the responsibility of every country, every region and all groups to cooperate in combating pollution and protecting the environment. The decision of Sultan Qaboos bin Said to present an award through the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for the protection of the environment was a clear indication of his commitment to a clean environment.

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TIWAU AWIRA, Minister for Environment and Natural Resources Development of Kiribati: The ozone layer was being depleted over some parts of the globe, varieties of life forms were being reduced and global climate was threatening the survival of small island States. "Greenhouse" gases, particularly carbon dioxide, continued to increase in the atmosphere as a result of unsustainable patterns of industrialization and the wasteful lifestyles practised in developed countries. If those were not controlled, global warming would increase and its adverse impacts would be very serious on small island States.

The text of the Climate Change Convention was inadequate, failing to guarantee the survival of small island States, especially from sea-level rise. Nevertheless, the Convention could be strengthened, and all should work together to achieve the desired objective. The industrialized countries should agree to commit themselves to stabilize their emissions of "greenhouse" gases at 1990 levels by the year 2000, followed by further reductions.

Kiribati is made up of coral atolls which barely rise above the surface of the vast surrounding ocean. The people depended on the ocean. The Government was interested in developing mechanisms for the management of marine resources in the high seas, contiguous to the country's exclusive economic zone. At the same time, it called on industrialized countries to stop activities which might have the potential of polluting and destroying the ocean environment.

SVYATOSLAV A. MEDVEDEV, Minister of Ecology and Biological Resources of Kazakhstan: Science had demonstrated the interconnectedness of the biosphere. Both industry and nature must be equally considered. The goal of industry must be examined and norms established for production that would reduce the intensive use and degradation of the environment. Ways must be found to develop with the least possible damage to the environment.

The heavy industrial development in Kazakhstan had led to great pollution of its biosphere. Now, possibly using money no longer directed to the military, it hoped to develop its ecological potential.

In 1990, Kazakhstan passed its first environmental protection laws. A state ecology programme has been drafted and a unified system of monitoring industrial activity established. Those ongoing efforts should receive help from the World Bank and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). All areas of environmental protection were being given priority and modern technology was necessary to prevent pollution of waterways, particularly those coming from the Urals.

One of the oldest farming areas in the world, located in the Urals, was now being degraded and it included an area contaminated by radiation from nuclear testing. That test site must be cleaned up in order to save the Urals. Scientific support was necessary from the international community and this issue would be brought up before the General Assembly of the United Nations. It was particularly important to create an international ecological arbitration commission and emergency fund.

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LOUIS ARMAND MIHYEMBA QUALI, Minister of Environment and Tourism of Burkina Faso: Burkina Faso would have hoped for the adoption of an earth charter, in line with the Common African Position, but supported the idea of a Declaration in the hope that the principles enunciated would be strictly observed. It joined the consensus on the Conventions on Climate Change and Biodiversity but hoped that the protocols to be drafted would fill in the lacunae, which were a source of legitimate concern for many. Each Convention must be provided with its own financial resources for implementation.

It was imperative that the Global Environment Facility be extended to other activities, including the problem of desertification. The success of the Programme of Action for the twenty-first century would depend largely on the creation of a fund for sustainable development. Moreover, the implementation of "Agenda 21" would require the immediate implementation of functional and autonomous structures. The General Assembly must be the organ charged with defining the overall policy and strategy relating to environment and development. Burkina Faso supported the creation of a commission for sustainable development. It also endorsed the forest principles, as drafted.

Burkina Faso had participated in discussions on elaborating an international convention to combat desertification, and appealed to everyone to support such an endeavour.

MOHSEN ALI-HAMDANI, State Minister and Chairman of the Environment Council of Yemen: Yemen was aware of the relationship between environmental issues and the global economy. It appealed for international cooperation to help reduce the debt of developing countries and strengthen trade.

"Agenda 21" contains ambitious programmes to deal with global problems. Yemen attached importance to the Conventions on Climate Change and Biodiversity and would join the international consensus. In its region, there were problems of desertification and protecting the maritime environment. The Government had established a Council for the preservation of the environment. Those initiatives required a structural and financial support, which was lacking in Yemen, a developing country.

At the regional level, Yemen appreciated the work of UNEP and UNDP, and asked that international centres dealing with the environment be strengthened. The Arab people of Palestine and in the occupied Arab territories must be able to use their natural resources. That would happen only if they were able to exercise their right to self-determination. Yemen hoped UNCED would be crowned with success, together with its efforts to save the planet.

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United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

ENV/DEV/132
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DISPUTED TEXTS ON SOCIAL, ECONOMIC DIMENSIONS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT DISCUSSED IN MAIN COMMITTEE OF ENVIRONMENT/DEVELOPMENT MEETING

(Received from a UN Information Officer.)

RIO DE JANEIRO, 4 June -- The Main Committee of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) this afternoon concluded its first reading of non-agreed texts of "Agenda 21" in chapters which address the social and economic dimensions of sustainable development, including combating poverty, changing consumption patterns, human health and human settlements.

The question of unsustainable patterns of production and consumption and their link to the aggravation of poverty was the most contentious issue of the afternoon. The representative of the United States proposed new formulations which made no reference to the word "unsustainable" in reference to consumption patterns. Several delegations, from developing as well as from industrialized countries, criticized the United States proposal as going against the core issue addressed in the chapter on changing consumption patterns.

The Committee Chairman, Tommy Koh (Singapore), appealed to delegations, particularly to the United States, not to introduce new texts at this late stage in negotiations. He requested the representative of Australia -- whose delegation had conducted the New York negotiations on that chapter during the fourth session of the Conference's Preparatory Committee -- to chair consultations aimed at reaching agreement on the matter.

In another development this afternoon, Mr. Koh said he would personally address the non-agreed text surrounding the expression "people under occupation" which appears in certain chapters of Agenda 21. He recalled that the same formulation was contained in the draft Rio Declaration on Environment and Development. It was an important and contentious issue, he said, and it should be dealt with in a delicate way.

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For information media—not an official record

United Nations

Press Release

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CONFERENCE MARKS 'WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY'; HEARS 13 SPEAKERS IN CONTINUING GENERAL DEBATE

(Received from a UN Information Officer.)

RIO DE JANEIRO, 5 June -- The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) today celebrated World Environment Day, commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the 1972 Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment.

Statements marking the occasion were made by King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden, President Fernando Collor of Brazil, hosts of the Stockholm and Rio Conferences, respectively, and by the Secretary-General of UNCED, Maurice Strong.

The Conference also continued its general debate this morning, hearing 13 speakers, including Princess Chulabhorn Mahidol, Personal Representative of the King of Thailand.

Also taking part in the debate were the Minister of State for Population and the Environment of Indonesia; the Minister for Mineral Resources and the Environment of Mozambique; the Minister for the Environment and Natural Resources of Zambia; the Attorney-General and Minister of Tourism and the Environment of Belize; the Federal Minister for Environment, Youth and Family of Austria; and the Minister for Environment and Forests of India.

Other speakers were the Ambassador of Sudan to the United States; the Permanent Representative of Ghana to the United Nations; the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development; the Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (on behalf of the five United Nations Regional Commissions); the Director of the International Oil Pollution Compensation Fund; and the President of the Society for International Development, a non-governmental organization.

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For information media—not an official record

Observance of World Environment Day

MAURICE STRONG, Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), said that 20 years ago in Stockholm, on a day such as today, the world community had embarked on a new journey of hope for the opening of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment. World leaders were meeting today in Rio to fulfil that hope.

By the final day of the Stockholm Conference, Mr. Strong said, stimulated by a dynamic community of non-governmental organizations, the "spirit of only one earth" prevailed, despite the doomsayers. There had been predictions that the Conference was collapsing; but by early morning of the last day, it had come together. Agreement had been reached on an historic Action Plan, which had led to the establishment of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), which in turn had adopted as its motto the Conferences theme of "only one earth".

The youth and generations to come would hold the world accountable for what was done here, he said. "The fate of our world is literally in our hands for what we do today."

CARL XVI GUSTAF, King of Sweden, said World Environment Day had been celebrated in Stockholm at this time last year. It was an occasion for reviewing what had been achieved since June 1972. The result was a mix of bright success and gloomy failure.

The character of the environmental problems had changed and their scope was wider, he said. Global threats had become more precise, such as concern for the ozone layer, climate change and the loss of biological diversity. Against that background, those gathered in Sweden had looked towards Rio. Brazil and Sweden had pledged to work together to make the Conference a success.

The tree-planting ceremony held today came at the right moment, he stated. The tree was a symbol of the need for a long view, reminding us of responsibilities toward future generations. It was not an abstract symbol, because it had to be firmly planted in reality.

FERNANDO COLLOR, President of Brazil, said World Environment Day was a symbol of the campaign for the protection of the environment. It must be a moment in which the whole international community came together for a cause which was just and necessary.

The goals were clear, he stated -- not only to re-define the contemporary lifestyle, but also to re-define convictions about progress and what was expected from it. Now, at the end of the cold war, as the risk of total war had become more distant, another threat to survival loomed. Overcoming those new challenges must be the central concern of the present and future generations.

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He said the Convention on Biological Diversity, open for signature today, was an unprecedented document, the first signpost on a long road. It would evolve into an even more effective instrument, in particular with regard to the legitimate aspirations of many developing countries.

Statements in General Debate

EMIL SALIM, Minister of State for Population and the Environment in Indonesia: While affirming the responsibility to undertake global environmental action, the Rio Declaration must also affirm the right of nations to pursue development. It should pave the way to a new global partnership between nations and peoples. "Agenda 21" was more a statement of intent than a detailed plan of action, and global commonalities and national priorities must still be brought into agreement and balance. Agenda 21 should not be used as a means to hold development hostage.

A common future would depend on the ability to manage properly the linkage between the world environment, the rates and distribution of global development and world population factors. Indonesia was prepared to accede to the two Conventions before the Conference, fully aware that they needed to be considerably improved and that those efforts must begin immediately. Funding mechanisms to implement Agenda 21 should not become the means of conditionality or grounds for suspicion leading to inaction. Such mechanisms must avail themselves of all funding options.

Whatever was agreed on at Rio must be implemented, and that implementation be monitored, assessed and evaluated. That required a mechanism -- an institutionalized system of governance which should be cross-sectoral in nature. Indonesia supported the idea of establishing a council for sustainable development, with representation at the highest possible level, and with direct access to the General Assembly.

MANS JACOBSSON, Director, International Oil Pollution Compensation Fund (IOPC): Developing countries often lacked the human, technical and financial resources to combat pollution of the seas. There were only treaties dealing with compensation for pollution caused by spills of persistent oil from laden tankers -- the Civil Liability Convention dealing with the liability of ship owners for oil pollution and the Fund Convention which provides additional compensation when the compensation paid by the ship owner was insufficient. The question was whether these treaties had contributed to protection of the marine environment and whether they could serve as examples for solutions to other kinds of pollution. The IOPC administers the regime of compensation created by the Fund Convention and pays compensation for expenses incurred for clean-up operations at sea or on the shore.

The IOPC Fund is financed by contributions levied on persons in member States who have received certain kinds of oil after sea transport. Governments have no responsibility for these payments. Of the 1991 contributions, over 90 per cent were paid by the oil industries in 10 OECD countries. Most developing countries paid very little or no contributions at all since they did not receive oil in large quantities. When a major incident

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occurred, it was vital that neighbouring States, or indeed all States, be prepared to assist in the clean-up and that there be a system which enabled States giving assistance to recover their costs.

JOHN W. KACHAMILA, Minister for Mineral Resources and the Environment of Mozambique: In the developing countries, the persistence of poverty and limited economic opportunity were the main source of degradation of the physical environment. Mozambique has a population of 15 million people in an area of about 830,000 square kilometres. More than 80 per cent of the population was agricultural, producing 40 per cent of the country's export revenues. Fishing and forestry also had significant export value for the country. Agricultural, marine and forestry resources needed to be further developed and protected. Shifting agricultural practices, however, was causing a loss of large areas of agricultural land each year. Uncontrolled bush fires were an additional threat to land conservation.

Excessive concentration of over 50 per cent of the Mozambican population along the 50-kilometre-wide coastal zone, coupled with the large influx of people into the coastal cities, was causing serious damage to the ecosystem. Population growth, estimated at 2.6 per cent a year, meant that in 30 years, the population would double. Two-thirds of the population lives in absolute poverty. Combined with the destabilization impact of the war, these factors had resulted in a dramatic fall of the gross national product (GNP). To arrest this trend, the Government initiated a Structural Adjustment Programme in 1987.

Mozambique supported the Conventions before the Conference and hoped that flexibility and political will would be demonstrated to conclude all proposed agreements. Of particular importance was the question of ways and means of implementing Agenda 21.

KELI K. WALUBITA, Minister of Environment and Natural Resource of Zambia: It was time to create a world of equal opportunities and let developing countries trade their way out of poverty. The twin crises of environment and development represented the apex of the pyramid of global problems and required priority attention. The new reality of the interlinked crises demanded an all-encompassing and equitable new order of adjustment, one which was gradual but incremental.

It was the developing countries that most needed an effective resolution of the development crisis in the framework of the new model of sustainable development. The world must provide them with an environmental safety net as it adjusted to such a new order. In that context, it was crucial that new and additional financial resources be allocated for the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Conventions on Climate Change and Biodiversity.

At a time when Zambia was undergoing a process of rebirth, nature had unleashed in its region the worst drought southern African has faced in this century, necessitating the diversion of scarce resources from the urgent tasks of economic and social reconstruction. Zambia reiterated the recent appeal to the international community for assistance in coping with this natural

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calamity. With generous support, Zambia could endure the drought and continue implementing aspects of democratization and economic liberalization.

GLENN GODFREY, Attorney General and Minister of Tourism and the Environment of Belize: An overwhelming question concerning the environment was whether humanity, as a species, was sufficiently capable of nurturing the environment to assure its own survival. That question had religious, philosophical, moral and ethical dimensions as in the case of the morality and ethics of the present generation squandering non-renewable resources at the expense of future generations.

Present environmental problems were caused as much by inequities and an absence of social justice as by any other circumstances. Overpopulation was not one of the main causes of environmental degradation. Poverty had its roots in the failure of the developmental process to distribute wealth in a socially just manner. Population control without a more equitable distribution of resources would do nothing to address the cycle of environmental destruction.

Belize had resisted the seduction of mass tourism and had declared that the main marketing and developmental thrust of the tourism industry would be community-based eco-tourism. Belize was aware of its responsibilities as custodian of two natural treasures of global significance, the Belize barrier reef and the rain forest and pine ridge of the Maya Mountains, and would do all in its power to be worthy of those responsibilities.

ABDALLAH AHMED ABDALLAH, Ambassador of the Sudan to the United States: Over the last two decades, recurring drought, deforestation, ovegrazing, soil degradation and land mismanagement -- coupled with civil strife, refugees and displaced people -- highlighted the need for incorporating environmental and natural resource management considerations in development planning. Sudan, concerned with environmental hazards resulting from water utilization and the use of chemicals in irrigated agriculture, had embarked on arresting environmental degradation and ensuring sustainable growth.

Sudan's foremost priority involved addressing the problems of soil degradation and desertification, and it supported the establishment of a convention to tackle those problems. It also supported deforestation initiatives that were country-driven. Debt reduction and funding for environmentally sound projects should not be linked to structural adjustment programmes. Countries should exercise sovereignty over their biological resource endowments and receive a share of dividends generated for biological materials they provided. Sudan supported Agenda 21 as a working programme for the international community and called on the developed countries to help implement Agenda 21 for sustainable development.

Princess CHULABHORN MAHIDOL of Thailand: There was need to agree urgently to a fundamental set of principles that would provide a critical framework for actions by individuals as well as by nations. The Rio Declaration would not be legally binding, but it would have a very strong political and moral force.

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Principles which were of special importance included the pursuit of sustainable development; the upholding of the sovereign rights of States to exploit their own resources; the reaffirmation of the linkage between environmental protection and the development process; the eradication of poverty, with special attention being given to people affected by desertification and drought; the promotion of international cooperation to strengthen endogenous capacity-building for sustainable development; the recognition of the right to development; and the equitable sharing among States of the responsibility for the protection of the environment.

Agenda 21 should provide the basis for sustainable livelihood so that the inventiveness and aspirations of individuals would be increased. In Thailand, projects had been initiated which had identified a number of fundamental principles which contributed towards sustainability, including the necessity to address first the basic needs of the population before proceeding to income-generating activities, and the application of technology which was appropriate to the particular physical, social and cultural environment where the project was taking place.

K.K.S. DADZIE, Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD): The objective should be a "virtuous circle", whereby sustained growth would generate the resources to finance the investments necessary for the good management of natural resources, which, in turn, were essential to sustainable growth.

Five years ago, UNCTAD had joined the efforts of the international community towards sustainable development. Environmental considerations had been increasingly integrated into all aspects of the institution's activities. One result of that widened perspective was the close and fruitful working relationship that had developed between the Secretariat of UNCTAD and UNCED and the insights UNCTAD was able to contribute in the UNCED preparatory process. These included an assessment of the links between environmental issues and international trade as well as a study on combating global warming, which elaborated on the feasibility of a global system of tradeable carbon emission entitlements.

The final document of UNCTAD VIII -- the Cartagena Commitment -- was the first internationally agreed upon instrument that highlighted the specific need to incorporate development into environmental analysis. That approach put UNCTAD at the interface between national and international policy that would link -- or find optimal trade-offs between -- sustainable development, the protection of the environment and the promotion of international trade.

RUTH FELDGRILL-ZANKL, Federal Minister of Environment, Youth and Family Affairs of Austria: The Conference had fulfilled an important task, even before its opening, by contributing enormously to an awareness of the challenges that lay ahead. Expectations had run high, perhaps too high, but the responsibility for success or failure lay with countries, especially the industralized ones.

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Industralized nations must take decisive measures at home to maintain credibility with the developing countries. Austria had taken decisive steps in that direction by reducing the use of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) by almost 90 per cent by the end of the year and striving to phase them out completely by 1995; passing legislation aimed at a 70 per cent reduction of all precursor substances which affect the ozone layer; developing a waste management policy to reduce municipal wastes by 50 per cent over the next five years; and drawing up a national environment plan based on the principles of sustainable development.

At the same time, developing countries must be aware of their responsibilities. Sustainable development was vital. Austria was willing to supply new and additional financial resources, if it could be guaranteed that those funds would be used for efficient environmental and development projects. That could best be done through a restructured Global Environment Facility (GEF).

The texts of the Conventions on Climate Change and Biodiversity represented an important first step. Austria would sign both Conventions, but would invest its best efforts to strengthen implementation and elaboration, in particular on the Climate Change Convention.

KOFI N. AWOONOR (Ghana): Years of ecological destruction and neglect in the developed countries and a preoccupation with industrial growth at any cost had brought the planet to the brink of ecological disaster. Many societies in developing countries, through their historical and cultural experiences, already appreciated the delicate balance between economy and ecology and maintained practices that helped preserve the environment. However, patterns of consumption in the developed world had been promoted through the media as the ideal to which developing countries should aspire, with the intention that the "acquisitive profit machine and the cash nexus should engulf the whole world".

It was ironic that nations which had long ago denied the delicate balance of nature, even to the extent of subverting the values of the developing countries, now took the developing countries to task on those issues. Developing countries recognized the importance of better environmental management and had the capacity to graft environmentally benign technologies onto their indigenous ones. For that reason, the transfer of technology on a preferential and concessionary basis had been stressed, taking into consideration that intellectual property rights should not hinder such transfers.

There was also a basic difference between the developed and developing countries over the principles on forests. Forest ecosystems and resources were part of national patrimony, to be managed, conserved and developed by each country in accordance with national plans and priorities. They were not a global commons in which the industralized countries had the right to control the resources of the developing countries.

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TAYSER ABDEL JABER, Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), on behalf of the five United Nations regional commissions: The regional commissions had demonstrated in the last three decades that they were particularly suited to play a coordinating role in matters relating to the integration of environment and development at the regional and national levels, a role essential to achieve the global goals of equity and sustainability set out by UNCED. They also had a unique function in the follow-up activities.

Each commission encompassed countries with marked diversity in levels of economic development, in endowment of natural resources and in social and political systems. They were therefore in a position to adapt universal precepts to the specific circumstances of each region, subregion and country. Their cross-sectoral structure offered Governments an effective mechanism to respond to the challenge of environment and development issues and problems faced at the regional level.

If substantial progress was to be made in resolving environment-development issues in the post-Rio period, a regional funding mechanism must be established which could supplement the GEF and cater to specific regional programme requirements. The regional commissions strongly recommended that that avenue be further explored.

KAMAL NATH, Minister for Environment and Forests of India: India had a panoply of instruments to check environmental degradation, rectify the errors of the past and balance development with the preservation of the environment. However, less than 60 million hectares were free from environmental degradation. India supported the world's largest cattle population on less than 4 per cent of its land and suffered the consequences of using less than a fifth of its annual rainfall. Most of the vegetative cover was disappearing. A third of the population lived in slums and most Indians had neither proper sewage or access to waterbourne sanitation.

It was unacceptable that three fourths of the world's people should live in poverty. Development was the right of the developing countries. Mechanisms of conservation had to be built into development itself but there had to be a fundamental change in the wasteful patterns of growth in the North. The removal of poverty was the only viable strategy for the world. The process of development inevitably entailed some adverse environmental impact but all human beings had an equal claim on environmental space. The way out lay in a genuine sharing partnership between all the nations represented at the Conference.

The Planet Protection Fund, proposed by India in 1989, would purchase environmentally friendly technologies around the world and make them available gratis to any country seeking access to them. That proposal was being placed before the Conference.

MAURICE WILLIAMS, President of the Society for International Development: The Society had intensely debated the Bruntland Report for the past three years, examined sustainable development in theory and practice and

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looked at environment-centred economics. The conclusion was that, far from being a drag on world economics, environmentally-sound investments would contribute to a more prosperous world economy and a healthier environment.

The world would not be the same after the Rio Conference. People were truly ahead of Governments in calling for environmental protection, even it if meant a more modest lifestyle. In the twenty-first century the alleviation of poverty would be at the forefront and there would be a changed relationship between humanity and nature. It would no longer be acceptable to proceed with development and to clean up afterwards. Environment and development would be interrelated.

The Society was in the forefront of more sustainable development efforts. One principle stood out -- the need to make available comprehensive information and communication to support the conclusions of the Rio Conference. The Society would launch a programme to link its analytical expertise with non-governmental organizations around the world, in order to follow up on the Rio agreements, to forge new agreements where necessary and to push for world-wide compliance with the agreements reached.

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United Nations

Press Release

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ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE HEARS 15 SPEAKERS REPRESENTING GOVERNMENTS, BUSINESS AND TRADE GROUPS

(Received from a UN Information Officer; delayed in transmission.)

RIO DE JANEIRO, 5 June -- Ministers of the Environment of 11 countries and representatives of investment, business, agricultural and timber organizations were the 15 speakers heard this afternoon as the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development concluded its third day of general debate.

Taking part in the discussion were the Minister for the Environment of Iceland; the Under-Secretary of Natural Resources and the Environment of Paraguay; the Minister of State and Director-General of the Environment Agency of Japan; the Minister of Housing, Physical Planning and the Environment of the Netherlands; the Minister of Cabinet Affairs and Minister of State for Administrative Development and the Environment of Egypt; and the Minister of Rural Affairs and Environment of Jordan.

Also speaking were the Minister of Environmental Protection, Natural Resources and Forestry of Poland; the Minister-President of the Academy of Science and Environment of Cuba; the Minister of the State Department for the Protection of Environment and Natural Resources of Moldova; the Minister for Hydrology and Environment of Niger; and the Minister of Labour, Consumer Affairs and the Environment of Barbados.

Representatives of the following four intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations participated in the debate: the European Investment Bank; the Business Council for Sustainable Development; the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture; and the International Tropical Timber Organization.

Statements in General Debate

EIDUR GUDNASON, Minister for the Environment of Iceland: Because of Iceland's sparse population, high standard of living, low level of industrialization and use of renewable energy resources (a mere 0.1 per cent of energy being oil-generated) and little crop cultivation, the level of pollution in Iceland is relatively low. It does, however, have its share of

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environmental problems, such as the destruction of the vegetative cover and soil erosion.

At the same time, the maintenance of Iceland's high standard of living is overwhelmingly dependent upon the rational use of marine resources. And, even in Iceland's isolated geographical position, it has become clear that international cooperation is essential to ensure the continued sustainable utilization of its resources. Unfortunately, the Arctic has more pollution than once suspected. Environmentally speaking, there are no "islands" in the world anymore.

It is imperative that the resources of the seas remain available for human consumption. A far stronger emphasis must be placed on conservation and rational utilization of all marine species.

Pollution, by far, is the greatest threat to the future sustainable development of the marine environment. Land-based sources contribute about 70 per cent of all marine pollution; a convention to address that should be drawn up without delay. Furthermore, persistent organic substances discharged into the sea pose a grave threat to the marine ecosystem.

VICTOR CESAR VIDAL, Under-Secretary of Natural Resources and the Environment of Paraguay: While it is imperative to conserve the environment, most national budgets have insufficient resources for doing so. There is a need for sincere dialogue, without political pressure, on a solution to poverty, the depletion of natural resources, climate change and biodiversity.

Paraguay and other Latin American States have adopted a model on the structured use of their natural resources, yet poverty persists in some sectors of society. As a result, natural resources are overexploited and wasted, and deforestation results, leading to loss of biodiversity. There is degradation of the soil as a result of agriculture, contamination from manufacturing and industrialization, all of which have affected the quality of life of people.

With the adoption of democracy as a form of government, exchanges concerning development are being explored. Renewable resources are essential, the loss of non-renewable resources should be reduced and there should be criteria for the use of natural resources relative to the environment. Countries should use technology which will not result in the deterioration of the environment, but would lead to improvements in standards of living. All of this will be possible only if there is sincerity in international relations, together with technical assistance and increased additional resources.

SHOZABURO NAKAMURA, Minister of State, Director-General of the Environment Agency and Minister in charge of Global Environment of Japan: Japan's primary duty to the global environment is to take a lead in reforming society to an environmentally sound and sustainable one. It also has the responsibility to extend technical and financial assistance to developing countries and to contribute to forming a consensus among developed and

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developing countries.

Based on "common but differentiated responsibilities", all countries should cooperate in meeting the challenge of sustainable development for the entire human community. To safeguard the global environment, financial assistance, technology transfer to developing countries and an effective mechanism to follow up on the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) are essential. Existing channels and mechanisms of financial assistance should be fully utilized to deal with global, regional and national environmental problems. Japan will make a contribution through agreed mechanisms, concomitant with its status in the international community.

Japan will continue to extend assistance to developing countries in addressing problems of pollution, waste management, deforestation, desertification and soil erosion, aiming at the realization of sustainable development in those countries.

HANS ALDERS, Minister for Housing, Physical Planning and the Environment of the Netherlands: If the resources of the earth are not shared on a fair basis, the environmental crisis will never be solved. For that to happen, the industrialized countries must change their patterns of production and consumption. A major issue is cooperation in the field of technology. Environmentally sound technology is urgently needed, but it is not a magic remedy that will change the world. It must be incorporated into the existing social-economic structures.

Two milestones are already in sight -- the Conventions on biological diversity and climate change. The end result has fallen short of the original aims, but the Netherlands will sign in order to speed entry into force. Furthermore, the Netherlands will stick to its national targets in the field of climate change: by the year 2000, a reduction in carbon dioxide emissions of 3 to 5 per cent below that of 1990.

With regard to financing the follow-up to UNCED, in particular "Agenda 21", a variety of sources should be used, including a revamped Global Environment Facility. The Netherlands is already committed to an annual amount of more than 0.9 per cent of its gross national product (GNP) for development assistance. To guarantee an effective follow-up to UNCED, a high-level commission on sustainable development should be established.

ATEF EBEID, Minister of Cabinet Affairs and Minister of State for Administrative Development and the Environment of Egypt: Egypt has set up a comprehensive environmental plan. Last month, it held a conference, with participation of international agencies, that presented and reviewed plans dealing with the environment. The population explosion must be arrested in three to 10 years. Every person must plant one tree every year. Water must be preserved and protected and air pollution arrested. All national resources and heritage must be protected. Monetary resources must be made available from a series of sources, and those funds should be administered more effectively. Relationships with the international community must be promoted

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and improved. Incentives must be provided to those combating pollution. In Egypt, efforts have been focused on the private sector and particularly on non-governmental organizations.

Egypt's national experience is specifically linked to Agenda 21. It wishes to promote its own potential and to develop its own human resources. Egypt looks forward to further regional cooperation to combat coastal pollution and is keen to participate in the implementation of any plan to protect its seas. It proposes levying a tax of one dollar on every tourist to assist in the protection of the seas. Egypt calls for action to combat desertification in Africa and supports experimental programmes to increase green areas. In regrading the provision of financing for agreed-tc programmes, all must join in in accordance with their potential and resources.

HERBERT CHRISTIE, Director, European Investment Bank: The Bank is the European Community's long-term lending institution. Its business, investment and investment financing cover virtually all sectors of the economy other than the social infrastructure. An environmental dimension is inherent in every investment project and needs to be taken into account. While there is no special group in the Bank for environmental analysis, all staff have to be aware of the environmental dimension.

Investment promoters can be encouraged to cut down pollution through national environmental legislation and through persuasion by an implementation agency such as the Bank. It is often possible to demonstrate that avoiding pollution at its source will be less costly than neutralizing it later. Moreover, the value of a company depends in part on environmental performance and possible liabilities resulting from that performance.

ABDEL-RAZZAQ TUBAISHAD, Minister of Rural Affairs and Environment of Jordan: The resources of the Jordan region have been strained by an almost uninterrupted series of wars. Despite that, Jordan has been deeply committed to the United Nations message of peace, freedom of expression, fulfilment of basic human needs and the need for justice, in order to ensure development and a safe environment. For its part, Jordan a few days ago announced a national strategy to protect its environment, which would include environmental education in all schools, continued protection of sensitive areas, and strict control over water and air pollution.

The Rio Conference should consolidate the commitment to translate into action the concerns expressed in 1972 in Stockholm. In the intervening 20 years, the growing cost of development has become clear, and the increasing gap between rich and poor has become more obvious. A comprehensive approach must be pursued to meet the demands of a new era of economic growth. The developing countries must obtain a fair share of the resources to allow growth in a sustainable environment.

The differences that exist in the major Conventions should be overcome, since those agreements will enable the developing countries to face the challenge of the future. New and additional financial resources must be earmarked for the developing countries and new structural arrangements

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designed to implement Agenda 21. Furthermore, the Conventions on climate change and biodiversity were imperative.

STEPHAN SCHMIDHEINY, Chairman of the Business Council for Sustainable Development: Consumers want environmentally safe products. The media is paying closer attention to the environmental effects of business. Insurance companies are more amenable to dealing with clean and efficient companies. All those trends indicate that the interest of business in economic efficiency and environmental protection will help, rather than hurt, investment.

Developing countries should allow efficiency and transparency to be their guide. Trade is the basis of economic growth and such growth is the basis of effective resource management and environmental protection. It is generally felt that the market generally does not imply moral values, but it promotes efficiency. And efficiency has its ethical dimensions.

Business must move beyond back-door lobbying, just as Government must give up command-and-control regulation. Open negotiations between business and government to achieve the optimal mix of regulation and self-regulation must take place, so markets can be allowed to reflect the economic truth. Governments should offer economic incentives to reward those companies that continue to improve their environmental record. A good example concerns the area of farming and forestry, which sustain the livelihood of almost half the planet. Both have been influenced by markets that acted against efficient use. Artificial subsidies should be removed, and new partnerships developed, to create the right market signals.

EDUARDO J. TRIGO, Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture: The challenge of sustainable development is the challenge of overcoming poverty. Billions of people continue to live in indecent conditions and have to destroy their environment to survive. There is also an excess of consumption, loss of energy and lifestyle that are not sustainable in the more affluent parts of the world. There could not be further sacrifices on the economies of the developing countries. The recovery of economic growth is a priority that cannot be negotiated. There is an urgent need for institutional assistance.

These things have particular significance for Latin American and Caribbean countries. There is a profound degradation of resources and in some cases the limit may already have been reached. In Latin America, the degradation is more linked to poverty. Agriculture is carried out in poor and non-fertile soil conditions and farmers are continually marginalized. For them to take advantage of new opportunities, protectionism that affects the prices of products must be overcome. A mechanism among the Amazon countries to preserve Amazonia is a clear example that those countries are aware of the problem and are committed to working together. The only problem is the lack of resources. It is hoped that the developed countries will commit themselves to the challenge in the region.

STEFAN KOZLOWSKI, Minister of Environmental Protection, Natural Resources and Forestry of Poland: The new government of Poland intends to be guided by

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the idea of sustainable development. Because of its central location in Europe, Poland must approach the issues from the point of view of more than one State.

Poland faces a difficult economic situation. Its high foreign debt is a barrier to development and will affect implementation of environmental policy by, for example, delaying the restructuring of the economy and preventing the closure of plants with old and environmentally harmful technology. A similar situation exists throughout Central and Eastern Europe. These countries are a third group -- apart from the rich of the North and the poor of the South -- "countries in transition", not poor in the classical meaning of the term, but not rich and facing grave environmental hazards. This group of States should be treated in a different way in discussions on the division of financial burdens and the stream of assistance directed at protecting the world environment.

Poland is part of several initiatives designed to protect the environment. Among them is a programme to clean up the Baltic Sea, establish transboundary biosphere reserves, rehabilitate the degraded environment in the Silesian industrial centres on the Poland-Czechoslovakia border and the "dirty triangle" on the German-Polish-Czechoslovakian border.

ROSA ELENA SIMEON NEGRIN, Minister-President of the Academy of Science and Environment of Cuba: Development cannot be based on the consumption patterns of the industrial world. It is impossible to separate development from the conservation and rational use of resources. Without structural economic reform, it will be impossible to solve the problems of poverty, health and education. Cuba has been able to eradicate illiteracy, reverse the trend of deforestation, reduce chemical use in agriculture, increase the area of land under irrigation, recover eroded and salinated soil and introduce a mechanized method of harvesting sugar cane.

Cuba supports the Climate Change Convention, but levels and timetables should be specified. Specific goals are needed because smaller countries are tired of empty rhetoric and have learned long ago that rhetoric alone does not solve hunger. Cuba will also sign the Biodiversity Convention. It would be unfortunate if powerful countries now try to use particular interpretations to weaken the spirit and content of the Convention. The need to protect forests should not be used as a pretext for interference in the sovereignty of States. It will be impossible to achieve the goals of Rio without restructuring global economic relations, so that developing countries receive new resources and required technology, as well as access to markets. To condition additional resources on internal restructuring would be de facto interference in the sovereign affairs of a country.

B.C.Y. FREEZAILAH, Executive Director of the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO): Each of the cluster of issues expected as the successful outcome of UNCED calls for vision. The ITTO welcomes the two Conventions. Though not definitive responses and solutions to problems by themselves, they mark a beginning in a process for consensus on the future of life on earth. The ITTO supports the Rio Declaration and expects a consensus

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on the "Non-legally Binding Authoritative Statement of Principles for a Global Consensus on the Management, Conservation and Sustainable Development of All Types of Forests".

The organization also supported the adoption of Agenda 21, which provides for the content of its activities and the parameters for action which its member Governments determine for it. The ITTO's stewardship will be critically judged on its efficient implementation of the chapters of Agenda 21 concerning action programmes on combating deforestation and conservation of biological diversity and environmentally sound management of biotechnology. The ITTO's activities will take account also of the chapters on managing fragile ecosystems, combating desertification and drought and sustainable mountain development. Any action programmes in the sustainable development of tropical forests should look at all vital aspects of the resource base.

ION I. DEDIU, Minister of the State Department for the Protection of Environment and Natural Resources of Moldova: The political system imposed by force on Moldova several decades ago seriously affected not only the life of the people but also the natural environment. During the Soviet period, industrial production had priority in economic development, and technocracy was declared a basic principle of economic strategy. The belief that the human being is simply an element of the production system prevented their economic, social and spiritual needs from being satisfied. The allocation of enormous financial and material resources to increase industrial production resulted in projects which were economically absurd and had a dangerous impact on the environment. Investments in the use of environmentally sound technologies were negligible.

Moldova has embarked on radical economic reform to solve its economic, social and ecological problems. The new, democratic government has created market mechanisms to permit the rational use of natural resources and effective protection of the environment. Heavy charges are being imposed against those who pollute the environment. A new system of economic incentives is contemplated; it is aimed at the rational use of natural resources and an increase in investments for environment protection.

Moldova supports the elaboration and adoption of a common economic and ecology policy, under United Nations auspices, whose principles would be to maintain a proper balance between the volume of production and protection of the environment; to isolate the "technosphere", or economic system of production, from the biosphere -- the only acceptable vital environment for man and biological species; and the economic stimulation of ecological processes.

ABDOU HASSANE, Minister for Hydrology and Environment of Niger: Situated in the heart of the Sahara and the Sahel, Niger knows well about the degradation of the environment, of which there are many causes -- those caused by nature and those caused by humans. Since the 1960s, Niger has witnessed the progressive reduction of its water, soil, forest and wildlife resources. Its timid efforts towards development have also had perverse effects on the environment. Niger therefore strongly supports the principles of the Rio

Declaration. The Government has put in place a legal framework for protecting the country's natural resources, and all existing legislation will be adapted towards the goal of sustainable development.

Technical and scientific arguments force humanity to pay attention to the phenomenon of desertification and drought. The consequences will be immense unless appropriate measures are taken. Drought and desertification must be considered in any development action. That is why Niger supported, in the UNCED preparatory process, the idea of elaborating an international convention to combat desertification and drought. That would be a true instrument for the sustainable development of millions of people, and Niger proposes that the Conference adopt a resolution on the subject.

CARL CLARKE, Minister of Labour, Consumer Affairs and the Environment of Barbados: Small island States with limited land space and relatively large developmental ocean space face particular challenges in responding to the imperative of sustainable development. To achieve that objective, there will have to be fundamental changes in the role played by small island States. The international community must accept that such States possess unique characteristics. Their uniqueness and fragility demand the adoption of approaches to development that are environmentally sensitive.

The global climate change proposal highlights the vulnerability and special circumstances of the plight faced by island States. In Barbados, over 95 per cent of the resources from tourism, the major foreign exchange earner, are dependent on the sea, the beach and its immediate environs. The social and economic dislocation that would result from an increase in the sea level by only a few centimetres, or the careless dumping of garbage from oceanliners or the discharge from oil tankers become readily apparent. Mechanisms have been designed to address the global environmental problems, but unfortunately the per capita income limit is used as a major yardstick governing access for funding.

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8 June 1992

MAIN COMMITTEE DEFERS WORK ON DISPUTED PROVISIONS ON DESERTIFICATION, PROTECTION OF OCEANS AND LIVING RESOURCES

(Received from a UN Information Officer.)

RIO DE JANEIRO, 5 June -- The Chairman of the Main Committee of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) this afternoon proposed deferring, pending consultations, discussions on a non-agreed Conference text on drafting an international convention to combat desertification.

At the Committee's meeting this afternoon, the Chairman, Tommy T.B. Koh (Singapore), appealed to the developed countries to reconsider their position on the urgency of such a treaty, particularly for Africa, and called for attention to the Africans' concern for their environment.

Because desertification was a serious threat to the environment as well as to the livelihood of many people in Africa, it would be "very sad" if UNCED concluded without taking some action for international cooperation to combat desertification, Mr. Koh stated.

The text on combating desertification and drought was one of several in "Agenda 21" which were discussed in a bracketed text (signifying lack of agreement among the negotiators) and which were deferred to a later stage. This was due to the fact that the consultations being conducted by the Committee Chairman, or by a contact group, were still going on.

There was discussion, but no action this afternoon on controversial paragraphs in the chapter on protection of oceans and their living resources, in connection with the implementation of provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Mr. Koh renewed his appeal to the European Economic Community to help the Committee reach an agreement on those matters. He had made such an appeal earlier in New York at the last session of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference.

Also this afternoon, the Committee designated Bedrich Moldan (Czechoslovakia), one of its Vice-Chairmen, to serve also as its Rapporteur.

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MAIN COMMITTEE OF ENVIRONMENT/DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE CONCLUDES FIRST READING OF NON-AGREED TEXTS IN 'AGENDA 21'

(Received from a UN Information Officer.)

RIO DE JANEIRO, 6 June -- The Main Committee of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), meeting on Saturday afternoon, concluded its first reading of non-agreed texts in "Agenda 21", the programme of action covering all major areas affecting the relationship between environment and development, which will be submitted to the Conference.

A highlight of the meeting was the approval of a text calling for the convening of a United Nations conference to identify and assess existing problems relating to the conservation and management of straddling and highly migratory fish stocks. The proposed conference would also consider means of improving international cooperation on fisheries. Such a conference, the text states, should draw on scientific and technical studies being conducted by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and should be fully consistent with the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

The Committee Chairman, Tommy T.B. Koh (Singapore), praised the new text, declaring that it put an end to many years of negotiations on a very delicate subject.

The Committee also decided to place in the preamble of Agenda 21 a paragraph, which had already been agreed upon by negotiators in New York. It stated that in implementation of the programme of action, special attention should be given to the particular circumstances facing countries with economies in transition, since they were facing unprecedented challenges, in some cases, in the midst of social and political tension. The Chairman said the text was a recognition that Eastern European countries needed some temporary help from the international community.

Before a decision on the placement of the paragraph, there was a discussion on the expression "economies in transition", a phrase which had not been used in United Nations resolutions, and on the need to find a solution covering all chapters of Agenda 21 where the expression was bracketed

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(signifying lack of agreement among the negotiators). The decision on the placement of the text also removed from Agenda 21 all brackets surrounding the expression "economies in transition".

Also on Saturday, the Committee approved new texts on the question of the link between unsustainable patterns of production and consumption and the aggravation of poverty. The two new paragraphs of the chapter on changing consumption patterns stated that "while poverty results in certain kinds of environmental stress, the major cause of the continued deterioration of the global environment is the unsustainable pattern of consumption and production, particularly in industrialized countries".

Another new text approved on Saturday concerns the basis for action of a proposed programme area in Agenda 21 aimed at encouraging economic policies conducive to sustainable development. The new wording relates to the role of developed countries in this connection and it reads as follows: "In developed countries, continuing policy reform and adjustment, including appropriate savings rates, would help generate resources to support the transition to sustainable development, both domestically and in developing countries."

A contentious issue discussed on Saturday was a bracketed paragraph in the text on hazardous wastes, stating that Governments should ascertain that their military establishments conformed to environmental norms in the treatment and disposal of such wastes. After a protracted discussion between the representative of the United States and several delegations of developing as well as industrialized countries, action on the paragraph was deferred pending the result of consultations.

With the conclusion of the first reading of all bracketed texts in Agenda 21, the Committee was able to identify further contentious issues in the programme of action. Those issues are being dealt with by several contact groups that are expected to report back to the Committee early next week.

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